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AAFC MANUAL OF MANAGEMENT  
VOLUME TWO - BUSINESS  
PART ONE - PEOPLE MANAGEMENT  
CHAPTER NINE

## CHILD PROTECTION

### Amendment List

Amendment	Comment	Date	Authority
AL-00	Initial Issue	1 Feb 14	DGCADETS-AF
AL-01	Update to include links to Defence Youth Safety Framework	31 Mar 18	DGCADETS-AF

### INTRODUCTION

1. Defence complies with Commonwealth and States and Territories legislation pertaining to the management, control and protection of young people under the age of 18 years. Australia is also party to the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(1990\)](#). In May 2013 the Parliamentary secretary - Defence directed CDF and the Service Chiefs to adopt joint Australian Defence Force Cadets (ADFC) policy and procedures to ensure persons appointed or re-appointed to the ADFC do not present a risk to minors in their organisation. Vice Chief of Defence Force, who is delegated to administer the ADFC has specified the appropriate and ethical requirements in regard to child protection in [VCDF Directive 2014-03 – Child Protection - Australian Defence Force Cadets](#). The Australian Air Force Cadets (AAFC) is bound by these child protection measures and is obligated to respond to or engage parents or guardians of cadets under the age of 18 in administrative issues concerning their child, and to prevent, and report suspected child abuse.

### POLICY STATEMENT

2. Commander Australian Air Force Cadets (AAFC) will ensure that **all personnel** associated with cadets are aware of their legal and ethical rights and responsibilities in protecting children from abuse or harm while at AAFC activities.

### SCOPE

3. This chapter will outline the Defence and AAFC's commitment and approach to ensure that cadets can operate in a safe environment free from abuse.

### DEFINITIONS

4. Policy definitions are detailed at [annex A to AAFC Manual of Management Volume 1, Part 1, Chapter 1](#).

### POLICY PRINCIPLES

5. The principles of the AAFC behaviour policy are as follows:

- a. **Principle One:** The AAFC's policy to ensure children are protected is underpinned by the [Defence Child Protection Code of Conduct](#) outlined in [VCDF Directive 2014-03 Child Protection - Australian Defence Force Cadets](#) and the [Defence Youth Safety Framework](#) which specifies the appropriate and ethical conduct for protection of Australian Defence Force Cadets (ADFC) under the age of 18 years. The AAFC Child protection policy also aligns with the Australian Council for Children and Youth Organisations (ACCYO) Safeguarding Children Program.
- b. **Principle Two:** The AAFC will undertake recruitment and screening processes and ongoing monitoring of adult personnel as a strategy to prevent known perpetrators from participation in the AAFC and to manage the risk of abuse to cadets.
- c. **Principle Three:** **Adult Supervisors** will be required to undertake mandated training and be aware of their responsibilities for the safety of cadets in their care and will adhere to relevant Defence, State and Territory legislated requirements for working with children.
- d. **Principle Four:** The AAFC values, supports and works in partnership with parents, guardians, specified next of kin and other agencies in fulfilling its youth safety responsibilities. The AAFC will inform cadets, staff and parents about the AAFC child protection policy and procedures.
- e. **Principle Five:** While child protection and mandatory reporting is primarily a matter of State/Territory jurisdiction and may differ between State/Territories, AAFC policy dictates that any form of child abuse towards a cadet be reported to the appropriate authorities as soon as practicable. Failure to prevent or report child abuse is a breach of the [Defence Child Protection Code of Conduct](#).
- f. **Principle Six:** **Adult Supervisors**, cadets over the age of 18 years and any other person who has unsupervised contact with cadets will be required to sign and agree to the [Defence Child Protection Code of Conduct](#). Any person who has not signed the [Defence Child Protection Code of Conduct](#) is to be supervised by an Officer or Instructor of Cadets (OOC or IOC) while in the vicinity of cadets.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6. **Adult Supervisors** and any person who may have unsupervised contact with cadets must:
  - a. understand and undertake in writing to comply with the [Defence Child Protection Code of Conduct](#)
  - b. be familiar with and comply with relevant State and Territory legislated requirements for working with children including mandatory reporting requirements
  - c. be assessed as suitable by applicable police checks (including Working With Children Checks as required)
  - d. complete the Safeguarding Children Awareness Program (SCAP)
  - e. complete mandated training and recruitment processes as required by AAFC.
7. **AAFC executives** engaged in AAFC staff recruiting or engaging external providers are to ensure that adequate screening and checks are conducted to ensure that non-desirable persons do not have access to cadets.
8. **Unit Commanders** are to assess and manage child protection risks within their unit including ensuring that all staff and cadets over 18 years of age have fulfilled all screening and training required by AAFC.

### MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE (MINORS)

9. The effective management of members under 18 is essential for AAFC to meet its legal obligations and community expectations. The AAFC has a duty of care to ensure that its management and administration of members under 18 years of age protects the interests and safety of those members and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of minors.

### Compliance with child protection legislation

10. All personnel who work unsupervised with cadets must satisfy the child protection requirements in CH01 - Conditions of Service - Officers and Instructors; CH03 - Conditions of Service - ADF Support and CH04 - Conditions of Service - Civilian Instructor Volunteers and undertake required screening and background checking. Cadets over the age of 18 years must complete the Adult Transition Program.

11. Adult Supervisors and cadets over the age of 18 years must have a current Working with Children Checks (WWCC) before they may work unsupervised with minors and undertake any prescribed training as determined by AAFC.

### Communication

12. An incident reporting and management policy endorsed by DGCADETS-AF, will be developed, implemented and communicated to all stakeholders. This policy will include timelines, information on privacy and confidentiality, roles and procedural components for both the reporting of abuse and the management of the complaint.

13. Child protection policies and procedures must be communicated to cadets and parents in a language that is appropriate to the cadets and the community. AAFC will educate cadets about self-protection and have in place processes to allow cadets to report any concerns in a safe and secure environment without fear of retaliation.

14. AAFC will engage with parents or guardians for administrative (including complaints made by or against the cadet) or for health reasons. Where a cadet is to be interviewed for administrative or legal purposes, a parent/guardian or their authorised delegate must attend the interview.

15. Parent/guardians will be advised of approved activities their child can attend (outside normal parade nights) by Joining Instructions and requirement for completion of Parent Consent Forms.

## CHILD ABUSE

16. Child abuse is the mistreatment by a person of a child that harms or endangers that child's physical or emotional health, development or wellbeing. AAFC has a zero tolerance towards any form of child abuse. Child abuse can include:

- a. sexual abuse
- b. physical abuse
- c. emotional abuse
- d. neglect
- e. child pornography

## MANDATORY REPORTING

17. All Adult Supervisors and cadets aged 18 year and over are to be aware of the child protection obligations of adults working with minors for the state or territory in which they are operating. This is to include applicable legislative reporting requirements, complying with statutory requirements and understanding how to deal with complaints and allegations. States/territories may differ in their definition of a child and requirements for mandatory reporting of child abuse. AAFC has adopted, as a minimum, the legislative requirements of New South Wales, but where more stringent legislation applies in any state or territory, that legislation is to be followed.

18. Where state/territory legislation may not require mandatory reporting in some instances, AAFC requires that any Adult Supervisor who becomes aware of any incidence of suspected or known child abuse or if there is reasonable grounds to suspect a cadet's safety is at risk, the Adult Supervisor is to report the matter immediately to local authorities (civilian police and child protection agencies) and their AAFC Supervisory chain.

## INSTRUCTIONS

19. CDR-AAFC will issue specific instructions or directives as required to supplement this chapter. CDR-AAFC will ensure that all AAFC SIs or directives comply with this chapter and any other higher level Orders Instructions and Publications (OIP).

### Annexes:

- A.  Australian Air Force Cadets Code of Conduct
- B.  Australian Air Force Cadets Behavioural Expectations

Sponsor: Director-General Cadets – Air Force

### Related OIP

-  VCDF Directive 2014-03 – Child Protection - Australian Defence Force Cadets
-  Defence Youth Safety Framework
- SI(PERS) 1-7 - Child Protection
- SI(PERS) 8-1 - Behaviour
- SI(PERS) 8-2 - Alternative Dispute Resolution
- SI(PERS) 8-3 - Making a Complaint
- SI(PERS) 8-4 - Managing a Complaint
- SI(PERS) 1-6 - Safeguarding Children Awareness Package
- SI(PERS) 8-7 - Mandatory Reporting

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