

MA13-2261 – Supplementary email advice to COS PARLSEC – Inappropriate behaviour of an AAFC staff member.

Q1. His age

Response: The Leading Aircraftsman (AAFC) Staff member is 23 years of age.

Q2. Was he an AAFC himself and was he a Cadet along side these female Cadets?

Response: Before joining the Permanent Air Force the Leading Aircraftsman was a Cadet Warrant Officer in the AAFC at Number 308 Squadron.

The Leading Aircraftsman Instructor of Cadets has not been a Cadet alongside the Cadets who have submitted the complaints.

Q3 Are AAFC conducting a review into this?

Response: The AAFC commenced an investigation into the allegations. However when the allegations were confirmed by the female Cadets in the presence of a support parent the AAFC investigation was suspended. Due to the age of the female Cadets, the matter was then referred to the NSW Police for further action and review.

Subsequent to this a third female Cadet has made a complaint and the NSW Police have been informed.

Further action by the AAFC will resume when the NSW Police investigation is completed.

Q4a Is the situation of a 17 year old acting as an Instructor common and if so what are the structural arrangements when this happens?

Response: Yes the practice of having 17 year olds providing instruction is a normal part of the AAFC.

As part of the youth development system in the AAFC, Cadets are trained on promotion camps and given increasing responsibility for the training and development of more junior Cadets under the management and supervision of Officer of Cadets and Instructor of Cadets. They apply this learning by delivering instruction at weekly home Cadet Parades.

Suitable high performing Cadet Warrant Officers and Cadet Under Officers continue their personal training and development by being part of the instructional team on promotion courses. These Cadet Warrant Officers and Cadet Under Officers, when in this instructional role (such as on promotion camps) are still under the care and supervision of Officers of Cadets and Instructors of Cadets.

In this case, the Leading Aircraftsman (AAFC) staff member, an Instructor of Cadets, was appointed as the Detachment Executive Instructor on the promotion camps. This position is responsible for the drill, discipline, dress and bearing of all the Cadets on the camp. One of the female Cadets was a general service drill Instructor for the Cadet Junior Non Commissioned Officer Promotion Course. The other female Cadet was an Instructor on the Cadet Senior Non Commissioned Officer Promotion Course.

All Officers of Cadets and Instructors of Cadets are required to abide by the Staff Code of Conduct and the AAFC Behaviour Policy. This prohibits any relationship with Cadets at any time including outside Cadet activities, regardless of the role or rank of the Cadet.

Q4b Are there separate sleeping/eating quarters i.e. are they treated as equals to the other adult instructors?

Response: During the promotion camps at RAAF Base Wagga in January 2013 the Cadets were accommodated in separate blocks from Officers of Cadets, who were also accommodated separately from Instructors of Cadets. Cadet Under Officers were accommodated in the Officers' Mess with Officers of Cadets, all in separate rooms.

The female Cadets were accommodated in a separate floor to the male Cadets in the Cadet accommodation block. Cadets are accommodated with two to three Cadets per room.

Each of the Officers of Cadets and Instructor of Cadets participate in a Duty Staff member roster and are rostered as the Duty Staff Member for a 24 hour period. The Duty Staff member overnights in a room at the entrance to the Cadet accommodation at RAAF Base Wagga to provide short notice response to any emergency. The Leading Aircraftsman Instructor of Cadets was part of that roster of Duty staff members.

Generally, Officers of Cadets and Cadet Under Officers may eat in the Officers' Mess. Senior Non Commissioned Officer Instructors of Cadets may eat in the Sergeant's Mess. All other Instructors of Cadets and all Cadets of rank Warrant Officer and below eat in the Airman's mess. However, for the first few days of the camp at RAAF Base Wagga in January 2013 only the Airmen's Mess was open for all personnel. Cadets in the Airmen's Mess eat in a separate area to the Permanent Air Force staff.

Q5. Any other relevant information so we can have a more fulsome understanding of the situation.

Response: The Leading Aircraftsman (AAFC) is an AAFC Instructor of Cadets at Number 308 City of Maitland Squadron which parades at Rutherford. He is a Permanent Air Force member and currently holds the rank of Leading Aircraftsman in both the AAFC and RAAF. Before joining the Permanent Air Force the Leading Aircraftsman was a Cadet Warrant Officer in the AAFC at Number 308 Squadron

He was appointed as an Instructor of Cadets on 1 July 2012 and completed the Staff Initial Instructor Course on 9 July 2012. He had previously spent time as an AAFC auxiliary Instructor as an ADF member after completing a '*NSW Working with Children Check*' issued on 22 July 2011. He had completed the staff '*Safeguarding Children Awareness Package*' on 2 November 2012.

Of the two Cadets who have made the allegations against the Leading Aircraftsman, one of the female Cadets is from Number 310 Squadron Tamworth and one from Number 302 Squadron at Rockdale.

A third complaint was received on 19 June 2012 from a female Cadet in the presence of a parent at Number 308 Squadron Maitland. The allegation is the relationship occurred outside the AAFC while the Leading Aircraftsman was providing tutoring for schoolwork and it has been suggested that the relationship may have developed through the AAFC.

There was some initial hesitancy from the NSW Police about investigating these matters as they had no formal complaint from the female Cadets. The NSW Police require that the females make a formal complaint about the matter. The parent of the Cadet from Number 302 Squadron has now made a complaint to Police on 25 June 2013. The other parents are being encouraged to make similar complaints.

Air Force is preparing to write to NSW Police outlining the formal relationship of the Officers of Cadets and Instructors of Cadets to Cadets aged 13 to 20 years. This will outline the development philosophy for Cadets for the delivering of instruction to more junior Cadets. That **all Cadets** regardless of rank or position remain **at all times** under the management and duty of care of Officers of Cadets and Instructors of Cadets.

The AAFC has been providing support to all parties involved with these matters. Air Force support is in place for the Leading Aircraftsman.