

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE CADETS

ADULT BEHAVIOUR

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Defence has a responsibility to provide a safe and supportive environment where young people are able to enjoy a variety of positive youth development activities within the Australian Defence Force Cadets, (ADF Cadets). This is made possible through the efforts and commitment of the many adult volunteers involved, including Defence personnel, Officers of Cadets (OOC), Instructors of Cadets (IOC) and Defence Approved Helpers (DAH). These adults volunteer their time, experience and expertise to secure the wellbeing of, and best outcomes for, cadets participating in the ADF Cadets program.

POLICY INTENT

1.2 This policy provides direction to Defence personnel and the ADF Cadets, and guidance to young people, their parents/family and adult members involved in ADF Cadets program.

1.3 This policy articulates Defence and the ADF Cadets commitment to promoting the wellbeing of youth and protecting young people from abuse through a focus on adult behaviour.

POLICY PRINCIPLE

1.4 The principles that underpin this policy are:

- a. Principle 1 – All Defence and Cadet Adults behave in a manner that supports a youth safe organisation.
- b. Principle 2 - All Defence and Cadet Adults are responsible for their own actions and behaviour.
- c. Principle 3 – All incidents of unsafe, inappropriate and/or unacceptable behaviour are reported, recorded and managed in accordance with relevant Defence and ADF Cadets policies.

POLICY PRACTICE AND MEASURES

1.5 Defence and the ADF Cadets fulfil their youth protection responsibilities by:

- a. adhering to the requirements of the Defence Youth Safety Framework (DYSF) and the policies contained in the YOUTHPOLMAN¹.
- b. adhering to the ADF Cadets Code of Conduct (Adults) which describes the standards of behaviour for Defence and Cadet adults participating in ADF Cadets program.

1.6 The [YOUTHPOLMAN Glossary](#) provides definitions applicable to this policy

1.7 There may be situations not covered by this policy, or that require an adult to act outside this policy to keep a young person safe. Should such a situation arise, it is expected that adults advise their ADF Cadet organisation chain of command, of any action already taken, or proposed, as soon as it is reasonably practicable to do so.

1.8 The resources located on YouthHQ provide information and contact details regarding the types of support and counselling services, such as: Sexual Misconduct Prevention Response Office (SeMPRO) or the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Principle 1 – All Defence and Cadet Adults behave in a manner that supports a youth safe organisation.

1.9 The ADF Cadets are to ensure all activities are led by trained and experienced OOC and IOC who maintain the highest ethical standards when interacting with cadets and have the appropriate knowledge, skills and competencies to apply the principles in this policy through the completion of training appropriate to their role and responsibility.

Principle 2 - All Defence and Cadet Adults are responsible for their own actions and behaviour.

1.10 All adults working with young people are acting in a position of trust and cadets are likely to view both Defence and Cadet adults as role models and as such adults have a responsibility to behave:

- a. with the best interests of cadets in mind at all times;
- b. with integrity – acting honestly, respectfully and courteously at all times and not allowing mateship and/or familiarity to be misused to cover up bad behaviour or bring the organisation into disrepute; and
- c. in a way that encourages young people and adults alike to feel comfortable enough to point out attitudes or behaviours considered inappropriate, unacceptable and/or unsafe.

CODE OF CONDUCT (ADULTS)

1.11 Cadet adults share a responsibility for providing ‘special care’ to all cadets. The ADF Cadets Code of Conduct (Adults) is a component of the Defence approach to youth safety and describes the behaviour standards expected to be observed and demonstrated by all Cadet adults.

1.12 Failure to comply with the policies contained in the YOUTHPOLMAN and/or the ADF Cadets Code of Conduct may result in, where applicable:

- a. administrative or disciplinary action under the *Defence Force Discipline Act 1982* for Defence members;
- b. administrative or disciplinary action under the *Public Service Act 1999* for Defence APS employees;
- c. cancellation of acceptance as an ADF Cadets volunteer member, or administrative action as a volunteer; and/or
- d. a report being made to the police and/or relevant child and youth protection authority.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DEFENCE AND ADF CADETS ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER THE AGE OF 18

1.13 The policy - *Relationships between Defence and ADF Cadets Adults and young people under the age of 18* provides clear guidance and direction on interactions and relationships between adults and young people in the ADF Cadets.

1.14 As an Australia-wide policy position Defence defines the age of consent for all sexual interactions as 18 years old, irrespective of the state or territory legislation in which the interaction occurs, and will initiate disciplinary and/or administrative action accordingly.

1.15 The actions of cadet adults must not be deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and influencing a cadet, and in some circumstances members of the cadet’s family, for the purpose of sexual activity with the cadet

1.16 Cadet adults should be aware that where an inappropriate relationship has developed with a young person. Defence is obliged to consider whether their actions suggest an abuse of their position. Adults in the program cannot assume they will be protected from reporting action taken by Defence or a regulating authority because a relationship is claimed to have begun after the program concluded or after the cadet finished in the program.

Principle 3 – All incidents of unsafe, inappropriate and/or unacceptable behaviour are reported, recorded and managed in accordance with relevant Defence and ADF Cadets guidance

1.17 The policies and procedures of the ADF Cadets program aim to minimise risks to people and property, and to protect the reputation of the program and the broader Defence organisation.

1.18 Unacceptable behaviour is not tolerated by Defence or the ADF Cadets. Any breach of the ADF Cadets Code of Conduct (Adults) or other misconduct is to be addressed by the relevant Cadet Organisation headquarters.

1.19 All complaints of unacceptable behaviour made by young people or their parents/guardians is to be taken seriously and managed in accordance with the [Complaints Resolution](#) policy contained in YOUTHPOLMAN and the respective Cadet Organisation complaints resolution procedure.

1.20 The Cadet organisations must ensure that all Defence and Cadet adults are aware of their responsibility to immediately report in accordance with the Defence Youth Safety Incident Management policy and Guide, behaviour or actions that:

- a. if proven, would constitute a criminal offence; and
- b. lead to a reasonable suspicion that a young person is in immediate danger or has disclosed harm or abuse.

1.21 It is critical that individuals responding to and managing any disclosures or allegations of a sexual relationship or abuse that involve a Defence or Cadet adult or Defence contracted person ensure that the young person is made aware that he/she is entirely blameless.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

1.22 While conducting its activities and programs, Defence gathers and retains personal information about ADF Cadets members and participants. This personal information is regulated by a number of laws, with personal information held by the Commonwealth, regulated by the *Privacy Act 1988*.

1.23 Information may be shared with third parties when it is considered to be in the best interests of the young person's safety, health and /or wellbeing. The ADF Cadets must ensure that a decision in respect to the disclosure of information to a third party is in accordance with the Disclosure of certain personal information in relation to youth safety incidents policy contained in YOUTHPOLMAN.

1.24 It is important to maintain appropriate levels of privacy and confidentiality. Individual's making decisions are to consider what information is shared, with whom and when. All decisions about sharing information should be made with the individual's explicit consent (or parental consent for those people unable to give explicit consent). Information should only be shared with those who have an appropriate reason to know and be limited to what they need to know. Guidance on the disclosure of personal information can be found on the YOUTHHQ website.

Accountable officer: **The Vice Chief of the Defence Force**

Policy Officer: **Head Reserve and Youth Division**

¹ Part 1- Defence Youth safety Risk Management, Defence Youth safety Incident Management, Relationships between Defence and ADF Cadets adults and young people under the age of 18, Disclosure of Certain Personal Information, Defence Youth Safety – Use of Social Media, Defence Youth Programs Alcohol , Tobacco and Prohibited Substances, Defence Youth Programs Diversity and Inclusion.
Part 2 – ADF Cadets Youth safety, ADF Cadets Youth Safe Behaviour (Youth and Adults), ADF Cadets Complaint Resolution, ADF Cadets