



# Welcome to the Air Cadets!

A guide for new cadets and parents

# Hello, and welcome!

On behalf of all of the staff and cadets at 236 (Bollington) Squadron, it's my pleasure to welcome you to the Royal Air Force Air Cadets.

Joining the Air Cadets is the start of an amazing adventure, but we know it can be a little daunting at first for both cadets and their parents / guardians. We've produced this guide to help introduce you to some of the key things you need to know to get the most out of your experience.

If there's anything we've not covered that you need or want to know, please do ask a member of the squadron staff and we'll be more than happy to help.



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# Get to know the lingo

There are a lot of terms you're probably going to be unfamiliar with! As we're a part of the Royal Air Force family, we use a lot of military lingo as well as a lot of acronyms specific to the Air Cadets. Here are a few of the key ones you'll need to know:

## Structure

- The Air Cadets itself can be referred to by several names and acronyms, including:
  - **RAFAC** - The Royal Air Force Air Cadets.
  - **ATC** - The Air Training Corps. All of our cadets are part of the Air Training Corps, which is part of the RAFAC, alongside the CCF - or "Combined Cadet Force" - which operate in schools throughout the country.
  - **ACO** - This is an old term for RAFAC, which stood for Air Cadet Organisation.
- Each unit within the Air Cadets is known as a **Squadron**. We are 236 Bollington Squadron ATC. 236 is our squadron number.
- Local squadrons fall under the authority of a **Wing**. In our case, we're one of over 30 squadrons in Greater Manchester Wing.
- Wings then fall under the authority of a **Region**. Greater Manchester Wing is part of North Region.
- The evening meetings of an Air Cadet squadron are called a Parade Night. Not to be confused with when we're out on a public parade such as Remembrance Day!
- All cadets and staff in the Air Cadets hold a **Rank** to determine their level of seniority, cadets who hold a rank are often referred to as "NCOs".
- All cadets also have a **Classification** that shows their current level of training.
- We have three main types of uniform for cadets, which are most commonly referred to as Wedgewood Blues, Working Blues and Greens. We'll explain more about uniform later.
- Each squadron has a Civilian Welfare Committee (or Civ Com) who help raise funds, organise events and keep the squadron on track.

## Staff

- Each squadron has a number of staff, all of whom are volunteers. Air Cadet staff are officially referred to as CFAV or “Cadet Force Adult Volunteers.” The staff team can include:
  - **Officers** - These are uniformed staff who hold a Queen’s Commission, similar to officers in the military. Typically, one of the Officers will be the squadron’s “Officer Commanding” or “Squadron Commander” - often called the OC or CO - the person ultimately in charge of the squadron.
  - **Non-Commissioned Officers** (or NCOs) - These are uniformed staff who do not hold a Queen’s Commission, such as **Sergeants**. We’ll explain ranks in more detail later.
  - **Service Instructors** - These are people who serve in the military who also volunteer with the Air Cadets. They may be in any branch of the armed forces, so you may sometimes see Army or Navy uniforms on an Air Cadet squadron.
  - **Civilian Instructors** - These are our non-uniformed staff, they help organise and run parade nights and activities for the squadron.

## Activities

- After you’ve completed the joining paperwork, you’ll get access to the **Cadet Portal**, where you can see and sign up for activities.
- Every couple of months, Greater Manchester Wing run a weekend away called a **Wing Training Weekend**. On these weekends, cadets can get a taste of staying away from home whilst also learning new skills.
- On the months that there’s no Wing Training Weekend, there’s typically a **Wing Activity Weekend**. These weekends are non-residential but host a number of opportunities for cadets to learn new skills such as shooting or STEM.
- Most activities will require a consent form to be filled in and signed by a parent/guardian, we call this a TG Form 021, or **TG21 form**. If you have any medical conditions, each time you complete a TG21 form, you’ll also need to complete a medical form for each relevant condition, we call this a TG Form 023, or **TG23 form**.
- If you’re going flying (sometimes called an **AEF** or Air Experience Flight) or gliding (sometimes called a **VGS** or Volunteer Gliding School) with the Air Cadets, you’ll need to complete a special Aviation Medical form to check that it is safe to fly. We call this an **Av Med** form.
- Most events will publish **joining instructions** (or JIs) to explain what you need to do, and a **nominal roll** to tell you who is going.

# What we need from you

## Keep us updated with basic information

When you first join the Air Cadets, we'll ask you to complete a form called the "Air Training Corps Consent Certificate" or F3822A. This includes all basic information about a cadet including name, date of birth, contact details, medical information and a parent/guardian's consent for various activities.

We need you to let us know if any of this information ever changes. It is particularly important that we are updated when contact details, next of kin details or medical information change. Some of this can be done by cadets via the Cadet Portal.

## Information about any additional needs

The Air Cadets is a very inclusive organisation, but as you'd expect, we can't help provide the best experience for a cadet if we don't know about any additional needs they may have.

If a cadet suffers from any mental or physical health conditions that may require any adaptation of activities or treatment, do let us know. It is particularly important that we know about developmental difficulties such as ADHD or Autism Spectrum Disorder so that we can work with them to accommodate any challenges they might face.

Please be aware that unlike in schools, we're not all trained in dealing with these issues, so we'll usually ask parent/guardians if they have any advice on how to do our best for the cadet. This information will be treated in the strictest confidence, on a need to know basis.

It's also important that we know about any short term issues that may affect our cadets. This may include things such as **anxiety, stress, loss of a family member, difficulties at home, bullying at school** or any number of other things.

## Medication

If there's any medication that a cadet might need whilst on squadron, we need to know. Please let us know if the cadet will carry the medication themselves, if we need to hold it on the squadron for them or if there are other arrangements.

This will include medication for more minor ailments such as hay-fever. We spend a lot of time outside in the field during our summer months, so please don't forget!

# How parents and guardians can help

## Be encouraging

Young people get out of the Air Cadets what they put in, so please encourage your cadet to sign up for as many events as possible! Please also encourage them to attend as often as they can, we know things come up sometimes, but the Air Cadets is not a part time club to dip in and out of.

## Volunteer as staff

We're always on the lookout for new members of staff to help out, either in uniform or as a civilian instructor. For civilian instructors, there's no minimum amount of time you have to commit, you can just help out whenever you're available.

<https://www.236atc.co.uk/adult-volunteer>

## Join the Civilian Welfare Committee

The civilian welfare committee meet on average once per month. Their job is to raise funds, help to organise events and ensure that the squadron maintains direction. Many parents and friends get a great deal of enjoyment and fun out of assisting their squadrons as members of the Civilian Committee.

## Communicate with us

We try to communicate as much as possible via email and a parents WhatsApp group, so please do keep an eye out for our messages! Some events are very short notice and we hate for cadets to miss out because they've not seen the email in time.

Please also ensure that your cadet lets us know via Cadet Portal when they cannot attend, and that they inform us if they're going to drop out of an activity so that others don't miss out.

## Be understanding

Almost everyone who is involved with the Air Cadets is a volunteer, they do not get paid and often get little recognition for the time and effort they put in. The average volunteer spends well in excess of thirty hours a month planning, organising and running activities for cadets.

Please keep this in mind if things don't go to plan, or if things sometimes take a little longer than you'd like.

# Air Cadet uniform

The Royal Air Force Air Cadets is a uniformed youth organisation, so as you'd expect, most of our activities are done in uniform.

The uniform options are broken down as follows:

	<p><b>No. 2 (Full)</b></p> <p><b>Wedgewood Blues (With jumper)</b></p> <p>Our smartest uniform, worn for parades and special occasions.</p> <p>This uniform, apart from the shoes (and tights for girls), is issued for free to all cadets.</p>
	<p><b>No. 2A</b></p> <p><b>Wedgewood Blues</b></p> <p>Our smartest uniform, worn for parades and special occasions.</p> <p>This uniform, apart from the shoes (and tights for girls), is issued for free to all cadets.</p>
	<p><b>No. 2C</b></p> <p><b>Working Blues (With or without jumper)</b></p> <p>Our day to day "blues" uniform. Worn for most parade nights when it's not a special occasion.</p> <p>This uniform, apart from the shoes (and tights for girls), is issued for free to all cadets.</p>

	<h2>No. 3 (PCS-MTP)</h2> <p><b>Greens (Camouflage - Multi-Terrain Pattern)</b></p> <p>This is one of two types of camouflage uniform used within the Royal Air Force Air Cadets. MTP is typically considered the “new” style camouflage, and is the recommended option when buying.</p> <p><b>This uniform is not issued to cadets, but can be purchased relatively cheaply (details in the “Costs” section.)</b></p>
	<h2>No. 3 (CS95)</h2> <p><b>Greens (Camouflage - Combat Soldier 95 Pattern)</b></p> <p>This is one of two types of camouflage uniform used within the Royal Air Force Air Cadets. CS95 is typically considered the “old” style camouflage, but is still very much acceptable.</p> <p><b>This uniform is not issued to cadets, but can be purchased relatively cheaply (details in the “Costs” section.)</b></p>

Two often misunderstood bits of uniform are:

	<h2>Brassard</h2> <p>Worn on the right arm, the Brassard is used to display the squadron number and the various badges a cadet has earned. Most badges have a blue, bronze, silver and gold tier.</p>
	<h2>Beret</h2> <p>The cadet hat is called a Beret. It is to be worn with the badge two cm above the left eye, and is shaped over to the right side of the head.</p>

# Training in the Air Cadets

There are two main types of training a cadet will undertake within the Air Cadets, these are **Classification** training and the **Progressive Training Syllabus**.

## Classification Training

This is the “standard” training programme that all cadets must progress through as they go through their Air Cadet career.

When a cadet joins the organisation, they join as a **Junior Cadet** whilst they complete their **First Class** training. They will later progress from First Class through to **Leading Cadet**, **Senior Cadet** and **Master Air Cadet**. On average, a cadet will complete one of these classifications per year.

	<h3>First Class</h3> <p>In order to earn their First Class badge, a cadet will learn about the history and structure of the RAF and the ATC, the history of flight, fundamental principles of airmanship, basic radio knowledge, initial expedition training and map reading. They'll also be introduced to uniform maintenance and have to complete a basic drill sequence.</p>
	<h3>Leading Cadet</h3> <p>To earn the Leading Cadet badge, a cadet will learn about navigation on land using maps and compasses, principles of flight and airmanship knowledge.</p>
	<h3>Senior Cadet</h3> <p>To earn the Senior Cadet badge, the training begins to get much more aviation-focussed. Cadets can choose between learning about various methods of propulsion, airframes, air power, aircraft handling, military systems and more.</p>
	<h3>Master Air Cadet</h3> <p>To earn the Master Air Cadet badge, a cadet will choose a second selection of the same subjects available at Senior Cadet level to complete.</p>

# Progressive Training Syllabus

The progressive training syllabus offers a range of more cadet-driven training options. It allows a cadet to develop their skills in a wide variety of areas, through multiple levels.

Each badge that can be earned typically has four levels:

- **Blue** - introductory - typically run at a squadron level.
- **Bronze** - basic - typically run at a squadron or wing level.
- **Silver** - intermediate - typically run at a wing or regional level.
- **Gold** - advanced - typically run at a national level.

There are a wide range of subjects available within the progressive training syllabus, including:

- Leadership
- Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Shooting
- Flying
- Gliding
- First Aid
- Fieldcraft
- Radio communications
- Cyber
- Band
- Road Marching
- Parachuting

# Important notes about activities

## Flying and gliding

We do our very best to get Air Cadets in the air as often as we are able to, but it's important that you know that this can be tricky at times!

### Allocations

We are granted flying and gliding places by Greater Manchester Wing. We can receive slots of anywhere from 2-16 cadets, but we have very little control over how many slots we get or when we receive them.

### Weather and other unexpected circumstances

There are times when we will get all the way to an RAF station or Volunteer Gliding School, only to be told that the weather is not suitable for cadets to fly. For obvious safety reasons, cadets can only fly when weather conditions are at their best.

There are also times when the Royal Air Force may need to redeploy the aircraft we planned to use, or there's a fault with one of the aircraft, a fault with the runway, or a lack of qualified pilots. This can result in reduced numbers getting a flight or the day being cancelled altogether.

In these circumstances, we'll always work with the RAF to make the most of the situation, either by flying as many cadets as we can or organising other activities for the day.

## Bidding for places on activities

For many of our activities, such as Wing Training Weekends, Wing Activity Weekends and Summer Camps, we have to submit bids for places.

When we're bidding for places, squadron staff have limited information to give to cadets and we don't select who can attend. The process usually works as follows:

- About a month before the event, we'll ask cadets to let us know if they want to attend, and we'll usually ask for consent forms.
- Two to three weeks before the event, we will submit all of the paperwork for any cadets who wish to attend.
- One to two weeks before the event, Greater Manchester Wing will let us know which cadet bids were successful and send us joining instructions to give to the cadets with all of the required information.

# Cadet and staff ranks

All cadets and uniformed staff in the Air Cadets hold a rank, which determines their level of seniority in the organisation. You can identify someone's rank by the rank-slide worn on their shoulders (or on a tab on the front of greens uniform.)

## Cadet Ranks

The cadet ranks, from lowest to highest, are as follows:

	<b>Cadet</b> All cadets start at the rank of cadet, and many choose to stay at this level for the duration of their Air Cadet career.
	<b>Cadet Corporal</b> This is the first rank of authority given to a cadet. A corporal is a Junior Non-Commissioned Officer, or JNCO.
	<b>Cadet Sergeant</b> Sergeant is the second rank given to a cadet after corporal. They become a Senior NCO.
	<b>Cadet Flight Sergeant</b> This is the highest rank to which a squadron can promote a cadet. This is a Senior Non-Commissioned Officer rank.
	<b>Cadet Warrant Officer</b> This is the highest rank an Air Cadet can achieve, and is given by Wing after a challenging promotion interview.

It's important that cadets show respect to each other at all times, regardless of rank. However, it is particularly important that cadets listen to and respect those of a rank senior to themselves.

Not all cadets will be promoted during their Air Cadet career. Each squadron has a set number of places for each rank and can't always promote every cadet that they'd like to. It's important to remember that rank isn't everything and that you can have a great Air Cadet experience without ever being promoted.

## Staff Ranks

The first point to note here is that all staff ranks, regardless of what level, are automatically senior to all cadet ranks. This includes non-uniformed Civilian Instructors.

Adult staff ranks, from lowest to highest, are as follows:

Non-Commissioned Officers		
		Sergeant
		Flight Sergeant
		Warrant Officer

Commissioned Officers		
		Pilot Officer
		Flying Officer
		Flight Lieutenant
		Squadron Leader
		Wing Commander

There are many ranks beyond this for Officers within the Royal Air Force. However, Wing Commander is the most senior rank a volunteer staff member within the Air Cadets can attain.

Typically, the rank of Squadron Leader and Wing Commander are held by staff at a Wing level and above, with squadron staff (including the Officer Commanding) being one of the three lower ranks of officer.

If you're familiar with ranks from the Army, Royal Navy or Royal Marines, this comparison guide may come in handy: <https://i.redd.it/wp30s3v3xt221.jpg>

# Air Cadet Code of Conduct

**Upon becoming a member of the ATC all cadets are committing themselves to following this Code of Conduct and all cadets are required to:**

- Set an example they would wish others to follow and treat everyone with equal respect and dignity.
- Respect and be sensitive to individuals' beliefs, faiths and religions.
- Respect each other's rights to privacy.
- Not make fun of anyone else because of their colour, race, religion, abilities or disabilities.
- Keep others informed of where they are and what they are doing whilst engaged on RAFAC activities.
- Attend squadron parade nights at the specified times on a regular basis, unless leave of absence has been previously authorised by the squadron OC.
- Not leave an air cadet activity without permission from an adult member of staff.
- Abide by all air cadet orders when undergoing air cadet activities.
- Work as part of a team.
- Listen to fellow cadets and adult members of staff.
- Report any concerns they have about the way a fellow cadet is being treated either during an air cadet activity or at home, to an appropriate adult member of staff.
- Show understanding and sensitivity to others.
- Any cadet who is arrested, issued with a warrant for arrest, is under investigation by the police or social services or who is officially informed that a charge is to be preferred against them, is convicted of a criminal offence or receives a police caution, warning, reprimand or fixed penalty notice, or is the subject of any child protection concern (eg by a professional body, primary employer or educational establishment), is to report the circumstances to their squadron OC at the earliest opportunity.

**During their time in the ATC, cadets must never:**

- Bully fellow cadets or adult members of staff.
- Enter into a personal relationship with an adult member of staff or a Staff Cadet.
- Permit or accept abusive or discriminatory behaviour or peer-led activities (eg initiation ceremonies, bullying, taunting or abusive/indecent/obscene text, emails and social networking forum postings).
- Engage in inappropriate behaviour or contact (eg physical, verbal, sexual, including horseplay).
- Allow or encourage other cadets to engage in inappropriate behaviour or contact.
- Use inappropriate, demeaning or foul language towards others, (verbal, in writing, by phone, texting, email or via social networking sites/forums).
- Make sexually suggestive comments (verbal, in writing, by phone, texting, e-mail or via social networking sites/forums).
- Consume alcohol or misuse drugs or other substances when undertaking RAFAC activities.
- Attend any RAFAC building, establishment or activity whilst under the influence of alcohol, drugs or other substances.
- Smoke in public whilst in uniform (includes e-cigarettes).
- Undermine or criticise others (verbal, in writing, by phone, text message, e-mail or via social networking sites/forums).
- Put themselves or others in compromising or potentially dangerous situations.
- Promote their own religious or political ideals or beliefs to anyone.
- Let allegations, suspicions or concerns about abuse go unreported.
- Trivialise abuse.

# Our Core Values

There are four core values of the Royal Air Force Air Cadets:

## Respect

There are 2 forms of respect:

### **Self-Respect.**

People with self-respect do not behave in ways that would bring discredit upon themselves, the RAFAC or the Royal Air Force. They have high standards of social conduct.

### **Mutual Respect.**

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.

## Integrity

Integrity is the conviction to do what is right at all times. It is the basis for trust. It comprises:

### **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.

### **Honesty.**

Honesty is inherent in the RAFAC 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.

### **Responsibility.**

Being accountable for one's actions and decisions, a truly responsible person acknowledges his or her duty and acts accordingly.

### **Justice.**

A person of integrity practises just behaviour and treatment. Those who do similar things must get similar rewards or similar punishments. Only then will an individual earn the respect and loyalty that are essential to good leadership.

## Service

Service is a willingness, when required, to put other people before ourselves. Service incorporates the values of loyalty, commitment, pride and teamwork.

### **Loyalty.**

From the moment we are appointed we are each committed to uphold and preserve the values of the RAFAC. Those who are placed in positions of authority must be loyal to their team, representing their interests, dealing with complaints thoroughly, and developing their abilities through progressive training. Team members must be loyal to their leaders and their colleagues.

### **Commitment.**

Commitment works in two ways. For the individual it means making a maximum contribution whenever possible. This commitment is reflected in the award of an appointment in the RAFAC. When on duty it imposes limitations on individual freedom and requires a degree of self-sacrifice. For those in authority, it requires them to discharge their responsibilities and their duty of care to their teams and, more importantly, the cadets in their charge.

## Excellence

By striving for excellence we drive for the continuous improvement and innovation which will ensure that the RAFAC remains second to none in providing a challenging and demanding environment. Our cadets can then mature and develop into well rounded individuals protected by our Duty of Care. Key qualities include:

### **Self-Discipline and Self-Control.**

The most effective discipline is self-discipline, which comes from within and is not imposed. Good discipline enables us to achieve more than we would normally expect of ourselves. We should not indulge in self-pity, discouragement or uncontrolled emotion.

### **Personal Excellence.**

Every member of the RAFAC must strive to achieve and maintain the highest personal standards, thereby enhancing the competence, cohesion and reputation of the RAFAC.

### **Maximising Resources.**

The resources available to the RAFAC, both human and material, are limited. We all share an obligation to ensure that our equipment and property is put to the most efficient use. We must train, sustain and retain those who can do the best job for the RAFAC.

### **Pride.**

We must be proud of our expertise and that we are second to none in delivery of the cadet experience.

**In addition to these core values, we consider the following to be key to our success as an organisation:**

## Pride

Pride is a justifiable confidence in ourselves and the RAFAC based on success, attitudes to life and individual team spirit. We can compare ourselves favourably with any other uniformed youth service confident in the knowledge that we excel in providing a safe and stimulating environment for the development of our cadets.

## Teamwork.

Teamwork is essential if we are to sustain a vibrant and effective RAFAC in an ever changing society. It is about working together with each member of our organisation and with the other uniformed youth services

## Leadership

Though not a core value itself, leadership is at the heart of an effective and thriving RAFAC. Good leadership inspires, underpins and enables all our qualities, values and capabilities. It can transcend limited resources and overcome the greatest of difficulties. It is not solely the preserve of command; every member of the RAFAC 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:

*"Setting an example is not the main means of influencing another, it is the only way".*

**Albert Einstein**

# Costs

We try to keep the costs of being an Air Cadet to a minimum and receive a lot of funding from the Royal Air Force, but there are several costs you should expect when joining the Royal Air Force Air Cadets.

These include:

- **Monthly subs of around £14** - which covers the costs of running the unit as well as the majority of the activities.
- **Camouflage (or “greens”) uniform.** This can be purchased in new to nearly new condition for around £75, plus boots for around £30. We recommend Nick’s Kit in Royton for this: <https://www.nicks-kit.co.uk/>.
- **Parade shoes**, which can be purchased from Nick’s Kit, Cadet Direct or Amazon for around £30. We sometimes have second-hand parade shoes in stock and sell these for £10.
- **Wing Training Weekends** are optional training weekends that occur roughly once every two months. These cost on average £10 for the whole weekend, including travel, food and accommodation.
- **Wing Skills Week** and **UK Summer Camps** are optional week-long camps that occur in the summer each year. These cost on average £60 for the whole week, including travel, food and accommodation.
- **Overseas Camps** are optional week-long camps for more senior cadets that occur in the summer each year. These are our most expensive activities and usually cost in the region of £500 including travel, activities, food, accommodation and spending money. We only send one or two cadets on average per year to these camps.
- **Dining In Night** is an annual dinner we host in late-September to early-October for all cadets and parent/guardians. The cost of this is usually around £30 per person.

For all of the above, funding support can be made available from our Civilian Welfare Committee. If you’re at all concerned about the cost of an activity, please speak to our Officer Commanding who will be more than happy to help.