



## **Social contact outside of the workplace**

It is acknowledged that leaders may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents/carers of cadets, independent of the professional relationship. It is common for family friends and colleague's children to become involved in our units and this should not be discouraged.

What is also acknowledged is that there are individuals who sexually harm children. These individuals often seek to establish relationships and contact outside of the workplace with both the child and their parents/carers, in order to 'groom' the adult and the child and/or create opportunities for sexual abuse.

It is also important to recognise that social contact may provide opportunities for other types of grooming such as for the purpose of sexual exploitation or radicalisation.

Leaders should recognise that some types of social contact with cadets or their families could be perceived as harmful or exerting inappropriate influence on children, and may bring the setting into disrepute (e.g. attending a political protest, circulating propaganda).

If a cadet or parent/carer seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the leader should exercise their professional judgement. This also applies to social contacts made through outside interests or the leader's own family. Some leaders may, as part of their professional role, be required to support a parent/carer. If that person comes to depend upon the leader or seeks support outside of their professional role this should be discussed with the senior person responsible for your unit and the named person responsible for safeguarding.

Where necessary referrals should be made to the appropriate support agency to reduce the dependency on the leader. For more information on support agencies please contact the [National Safeguarding Manager](#) with details.

## **Social Media Friendships/Links**

Cadet leaders and cadets must not be "friends" on any social media platforms and social interaction outside of cadet events is prohibited.



## **Cadet instructor/leader relationships**

There may be occasions where a cadet turns 18 and becomes a cadet instructor/leader and, at that time, they are in a relationship with a cadet that has yet to turn 18. This risk needs to be managed locally.

An Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) or similar must be drawn up which is signed by both parties, parents/carers should be involved in this process too unless you suspect this may cause a safety issue for one or both the cadets (e.g. Honour based violence). The ABC will outline how both parties are expected to behave at cadet evenings, events and camps. At the very least it should include the cadet instructor/leader being transferred out of the unit where the other party is. The ABC must be scanned and stored on the Marshall record(or similar management tool) for both young people. It must be made clear any breaches of the ABC will result in disciplinary proceedings and possible dismissal from the VPC.

A risk assessment must then be completed listing all of your control measures as outlined in the ABC. It must be signed off by the Force Cadet Coordinator (or equivalent role) and sent through to Health and Safety for their approval. This risk assessment must also be saved along with the ABC on the Marshall portal. If the cadets do not wish to sign the ABC they can take a period of "Time Out" from Cadets until the other party also turns 18 or they can leave the VPC.

All of these instances must be brought to the attention of the Force Designated Safeguarding Lead.