

## Managing Cadet Behaviour

Corporal punishment and smacking are unlawful in all VPC settings.

Leaders should **not** use any form of degrading or humiliating treatment to punish a cadet. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards cadets is completely unacceptable.

Where cadets display difficult or challenging behaviour, leaders should follow the setting's behaviour and discipline policy using strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation.

Where a cadet has specific needs in respect of particularly challenging behaviour, **a positive handling plan, including assessment of risk**, should be drawn up and agreed by all parties, including, for example, a medical officer where appropriate. Training in relation to positive handling should also be given to the staff members involved.

There is some great guidance from the [Scouts](#) and [Guides](#) in relation to this and the links will help.

## The use of control and physical intervention

A leader will not be taken to have used corporal punishment if the action was taken for reasons that include averting an immediate danger of personal injury to, or an immediate danger of death of, any person including the cadet. The law and 'guidance for *schools*' states that leaders may reasonably intervene to prevent a child from:

- Committing a criminal offence
- Injuring themselves or others
- Causing damage to property
- Engaging in behaviour prejudicial, to good order and to maintain good order and discipline.

Great care must be exercised in order that leaders do not physically intervene in a manner which could be considered unlawful.

Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted or disproportionate physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

Where the setting judges that a cadet's behaviour presents a serious risk to themselves or others, they must always put in place a robust risk assessment which is reviewed regularly and, where relevant, a **physical intervention plan**.

In all cases where physical intervention has taken place, it would be good practice to record the incident and subsequent actions and report these to the Force Lead for Cadets and the cadet's parents/carers.

Similarly, where it can be anticipated that physical intervention is likely to be required, a plan should be put in place which the cadet and parents/carers are aware of and have agreed to. Parental consent does not permit settings to use unlawful physical intervention or deprive a cadet of their liberty.

### **Physical restraint**

Cadet leaders may in extreme circumstances find themselves in a position where they must use physical force on cadets to protect themselves, others, or even the cadet themselves in the event of self-harming.

This may of course be perfectly justified within law, but this justification should be recorded in writing as with any use of force. It may be necessary for the VPC leader to provide a **statement**.

Any use of force should as always be "reasonable in the circumstances" and necessary.

It is suggested that a report of the incident be compiled at the earliest opportunity by the cadet lead for the unit and submitted to the senior officer in the area with responsibility for cadets. Updates to this report should also be submitted until that senior officer is satisfied the matter has been resolved adequately. If there is a safeguarding concern, such as self-harm, then the DSL and National Safeguarding Manager should also be informed of the incident.

In addition, it may be wise to draft a letter to the parent/carers of the cadet explaining:

- What force was used on the cadet;
- Brief circumstances;
- Any first aid/medical intervention that was required as a result of the use of force;
- The fact that the matter has been referred to the senior officer;
- Contact details of the senior officer in case they wish any further information;

Any sanction against the cadet that has been decided immediately and the format of any future discipline action

## **Managing Cadets Behaviour – Sanctions**

Any sanctions should be imposed as close to the time of the misconduct as possible and appropriate to the offence.

## **Restorative Approaches**

The VPC as a programme is built on a restorative approach to conflict and misdemeanour, and the safety and prevention of crime and conflict is of paramount importance. Failure to challenge poor behaviour appropriately and consistently suggests that such behaviour is acceptable.

Applying a restorative approach to all conflict/poor behaviour is based on the understanding that young people can often display negative behaviour, and will often make mistakes as part of growing up, so it is important that they have the opportunity to learn from these experiences and do so in a safe environment.

Implementing a restorative process, when done so effectively, may often be sufficient to resolve conflict, repair harm and prevent further harm. However, there may be times when a restorative approach isn't an appropriate approach on its own, but can be used to compliment other disciplinary proceedings.

## **Local Resolutions**

Coordinators and unit leaders have the authority to suspend a cadet until such time as deemed appropriate.

Good practice would involve a discipline board might comprise the VPC Coordinator with a minimum of two other VPC Leaders or the senior leader with responsibility for cadets in that area.

An Emergency Discipline Board may compromise any three VPC Leaders, at least one of which must be from the Cadet's Unit. The decision of an Emergency Discipline Board will stand until reviewed by a local Discipline Board who may ratify, adapt or overturn the decision of the Emergency Board with documented justification. This justification circulated to the members of the Emergency Discipline Board for information. Any Board's decision may be reconsidered if further evidence is received.

Cadets may appeal against the Board's decision to the senior leader responsible for the VPC in that area. This review will be paper based but the senior leader may reserve to right to see the cadet in question and other relevant parties. Discipline records are to be kept for at least seven years after the end of a cadet's service in line with GDPR.

## Level of misconduct

Each Force should define their own definition of misconduct and should give thought to developing a panel of leaders to discuss discipline or negative behaviour as soon as possible.

It is recommended that each unit has a **code of conduct for young people** so that they are aware of the parameters they may behave within. These can be decided by the young people.

## Code of conduct

This section should be read in conjunction with the statement of expectations for cadets.

- If a cadet is unable to attend a weekly meeting he/she will inform a VPC leader before the meeting.
- The VPC unit leader will review the membership of any cadet who fails without notice to attend meetings on three consecutive weeks.
- Cadets issued with uniform will ensure that when required it is brought to every meeting, along with suitable PT kit for physical exercise, unless otherwise directed by a member of VPC leadership.
- Cadets will treat all leaders, guests and other cadets with respect at all times. Inspectors and above and members of the public will be addressed as "sir" or "ma'am" (rhymes with jam), sergeants as "sergeant" and other VPC leaders as "staff".
- Any Cadet who gives a pledge to attend a VPC commitment must do so unless some exceptional reason prevents it, in which case a member of VPC leadership must be informed as soon as practicable.
- Subscriptions (if levied) must be paid promptly. Any persistent evasion of payment must be investigated by the VPC unit leader.
- Uniform is not to be worn in public unless under the direct authority of a member of a VPC leader. Anyone not adhering to this at any time may bring the Police service or VPC into disrepute or displays an adverse image of the VPC shall have their membership reviewed.
- The VPC will not tolerate any discrimination on the grounds of an individual's nationality, gender (including transgender), race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age or disability.
- The VPC will not tolerate any bullying, aggressive, overbearing or violent behaviour.

- Cadets are not permitted to smoke or chew in uniform whilst in the public view (except when taking a recognised meal break in the case of chewing). If deemed necessary Local Codes of Conduct may be developed to address specific needs of the unit.

Forces might also want to include guidance in relation to Social Media accounts and appropriate posts.

## **Written warnings**

A written warning will consist of a description of the breach of conduct/discipline, the date of the event, the name of the VPC leader dealing, any mitigation, and an action plan for the cadet which may include an **Acceptable Behaviour Contract**. The warning and any action plans should be written in conjunction with the cadet so they can express their understanding of how their behaviour affects others and their own ability to participate and should be signed by the cadet leader and the cadet, accepting the incident occurred and the terms of the action plan. A copy of the written warning should be kept on the cadet's personal file

A cadet may refuse to sign the written warning and request a Discipline Board if they feel that they have not been dealt with fairly.

## **Suspension**

Cadets may be suspended for a minimum of one week. There is no upper limit for suspension as Court cases may go on for many months.

However the cadet must be informed of when the suspension will end if possible, even if there is no date attached to this (i.e. "when the case against you is disproved or NFA'd"). A record of the suspension including the reasons, the names of the VPC leaders making the decision, the period of suspension, and any action plans formulated for the return of the cadet must be placed on the cadet's file.

The Force Coordinator/Manager should also be informed.

## **Dismissal procedure**

The dismissal of a cadet should never be taken lightly. However conversely, failing to dismiss cadets who no longer deserve a place in the organisation can prove counter-productive. Anecdotal evidence makes it clear that those Cadet Leaders who rigidly adhere to a discipline code have fewer discipline issues and have better attendance levels. If a cadet is threatened with disciplinary action that never

materialises then other cadets may believe that the behaviour that led to the threat is acceptable.

Dismissal will be recorded in the same way as suspension on the cadet's file (see above). Notification of the dismissal will be sent to the Ch Inspector with responsibility for cadets in the area for review.

There is anecdotal evidence of cadets being dismissed from one unit and attempting to join another unit. This should be guarded against by cross unit communication of the fact of the dismissal, but not the details.

## **Dismissed**

Cadets must surrender their entire uniform as soon as practicable. Refusal to surrender a uniform will be considered a theft and dealt with as such. All necessary legal and appropriate steps will be taken to reclaim the uniform.