

From: Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty CBE RAFR
Commandant



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Dear Parents/Guardians,

I write as Commandant of the RAF Air Cadets to thank you all for your understanding of the situation we are facing in the national fight against COVID-19. I know that you and your son or daughter (perhaps more than one!) will have been deeply disappointed to see the cessation of all face-to-face cadet activity for the foreseeable future but, as I am sure you will appreciate, in order to abide by the Government's direction on social distancing and non-essential travel, we had no option but to close our units. My staff and all our wonderful volunteers are either working from home or diverted to wider support of the COVID-19 response and I pay tribute to them for their professionalism in the face of an unprecedented national emergency.

Before I go on to describe what we are doing to try and stay connected, I hope you are all keeping safe and well and that you and your loved ones are coping as best you can with the impact of this virus on your everyday lives. I know many of you will be working from home, some will have significant financial concerns regarding the economy, jobs, savings, etc. Perhaps even more worrying, some of you will have had the virus or are still recovering and many of you will be worried about elderly relatives or those who are particularly vulnerable to its symptoms. And sadly, as I write this, I suspect some of you may already have lost someone you love to the virus, in which case you have our deepest condolences. There is little we can do remotely other than to send you the love and best wishes of 58,000 members of the RAF Air Cadets family and hope you and your loved ones come through this safe and well. You are all in our thoughts and prayers.

I hope by now that your son or daughter has been able to re-connect with their unit via on-line means. Our staffs and volunteers have been working incredibly hard to roll out Microsoft Teams to every ATC unit. This will allow the adult volunteers to create virtual parades and deliver activity via this online system. This is all new territory for us so some units may not yet be up and running but do encourage your cadet to keep in touch with other cadets and their adult volunteers so they can get involved in as much of the activity as they can. For those in the CCF(RAF) Contingents, who use a different IT system, we are exploring ways of connecting with you, too, and your son or daughter is welcome to join a local ATC unit remotely in order to join in their activities should they wish. There is much work going on to develop on-line training and there will be some fun activities such as a monthly Commandant's Challenge with which your cadet may wish to be involved. Other ways of keeping in touch are the RAF Air Cadets



website <https://www.raf.mod.uk/aircadets/>, where regular updates on COVID-19 and wider RAF Air Cadets news is posted. We also have Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts and I have personal Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts which can be found at the end of this email. Those cadets old enough to access are welcome to join. One of our priorities is to keep cadets, volunteers and staff connected during this difficult time so that as many as possible return to us when normal operations resume.

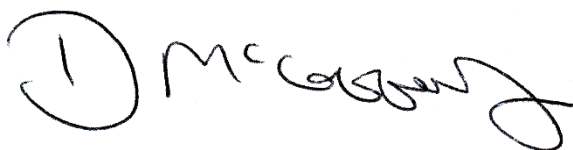
Looking to the future, we will continue to abide by Government direction and we will return to face-to-face cadet activity just as soon as we can. As you may know, we have taken the tough decision to cancel all summer face-to-face activity which takes place on a national scale in order to focus our efforts on designing and delivering the alternative on-line cadet experience. This decision has enabled staff and volunteers to plan accordingly and has removed the risk of false hope and expectation from our cadets who, whilst understandably disappointed, can at least have certainty rather than vague promises of delivery. We are actively reviewing the impact of these cancellations and postponements on individual cadets and will do our best to reallocate places to those who remain eligible for the events next year.

For the next 3 months we have decided to cease taking that element of cadet subscription that goes to the Corps Fund. Region, wing and squadron civilian committees have also been asked to consider suspension of subscriptions during this period. Further suspension will be kept under review as the COVID-19 situation evolves.

I hope you will find this update of value and feel reassured that the RAF Air Cadets continues to function despite the many challenges we face. We have an enviable reputation as a world class uniformed youth organisation and you can rest assured that every member of my team is working hard to ensure we maintain that reputation and return to normal just as soon as circumstances allow. If you or your cadet are facing particular challenges, please reach out to your local staff and adult volunteers and we will do what we can to support you. Do Keep in touch and encourage your son or daughter to keep connected and stay positive. This situation will not last forever and whilst these are disorientating times for everyone, the RAF Air Cadets will be in great shape to celebrate its 80th Anniversary next year. In the interim, stay safe, support the NHS, and save lives.

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Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D McCafferty', written in a cursive style.

Dawn McCafferty
Air Commodore
Commandant
Royal Air Force Air Cadets