



USAFA Parents' Club Handbook

**Best Practices
for
Parents' Clubs of the
U.S. Air Force Academy**

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Forward

The challenge of establishing and running a USAFA Parents' Club evolves from year to year. Clubs are unique and vary in multiple ways, but the one common factor for all clubs is they never stay the same, especially when it comes to membership. Parents' club attrition is a constant factor that we as leaders face every year, as cadets enter the Academy and graduate, while others leave for various reasons. People come, and people go. Generally, as cadets exit, so do most parents. Club leadership is subject to attrition, and experience levels can fluctuate. The need to pass on the club's institutional and written knowledge becomes vital.

The Parent Liaison Team has done an outstanding job of facilitating smooth leadership transitions over the years through several platforms, including Parents' Club Presidents' Conferences where new presidents can learn about what is needed to be a club president. Learning what to do, how to do it, and when, as well as why, is essential. That is the intent of this handbook and why David Seale, the current Northeast Florida Parents' Club president, and I wanted to put something together.

My wife Gloria and I have been involved with USAFA and a few military preparatory schools, including the USAFA Preparatory School, since 2012 when our oldest was pursuing a service academy education. Now, it has been a 12-year journey for us as parents as our youngest is a 2024 graduate and our oldest a 2018 graduate. We have been not only club members of a few USAFA Parents' Clubs but members of the Prep School Parents' associations, too. Our two sons' journeys have had their twists and turns, including medical setbacks and other challenges as many of you can, I'm sure, relate to. As our sons dove deeper into achieving their dream of an Academy education, so did we as parents. We volunteered in a lot of capacities and learned much more about USAFA and how it works.

Serving as a club president and in other positions over the years has been extremely rewarding and enjoyable. Establishing new military-associated relationships via our sons' journeys with parents across the country is nothing short of awesome. Sharing our experiences for encouragement and support is simply a blessing. It is my honor and privilege to have the opportunity to participate and contribute in the creation of this handbook. David and I hope it is a valuable asset for your club presidency and that it becomes the de facto standard for addressing the common challenges of parents' club sustainability.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Chadwick,

*Former President of the Central California Parents' Club and
Parent Ambassador*

Introduction

This handbook serves as a quick reference guide and resource tool kit.

Parents' clubs exist to support the ***parents and guardians*** of USAFA cadets. The USAFA experience is unique and unlike traditional universities. These organizations provide opportunities to ask questions, voice opinions and grow personal networks.

USAFA Parents' Clubs provide an opportunity for parents of cadets to connect with one another and stay connected to the Academy through leadership and volunteer opportunities, candidate outreach, attending and hosting local and regional events, social and professional networking, and more. Parents' clubs have the unique ability to engage parents, alumni and community partners to create a network that celebrates and supports the Air Force, Space Force and the Academy. By volunteering time, energy, and talent in this program, you and the members of your parents' clubs play an essential role in the mission to support and serve the USAFA parent community.

We are grateful for your engagement, your leadership and your support! We hope your experience with your parents' club is fun and rewarding in whatever role you choose to serve.



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Purpose of this Handbook

USAFA Parents' Clubs are separate organizations that do not fall under the direct supervision of the USAFA Parent Liaison Team or the Association of Graduates (AOG). Parents' Clubs are run independently and operate as agreed upon by their membership.

This handbook has been created **by** parents' club leaders **for** parents' club leadership. The material contained in these pages is meant to provide recommendations, share best practices, and provide incoming leaders with the tools necessary to assume a successful leadership role.

This Quick Reference Guide and Resource Tool Kit is a dynamic and living document and it will be updated periodically. The recommendations included in this handbook are not intended to be fully comprehensive, restrictive, mandatory, or required. They are simply "best practices" and recommendations that may aid your parents' club and its members. We recommend that you review the manual thoroughly and contact the USAFA Parents' Liaison Team with any questions or concerns.

Parent Club Partners and Resources

USAFA Parent Liaison Team

The USAFA Parent Liaison Team is the direct link between the Academy senior leadership and the parent community. The team communicates to the parent community through various avenues and shares information *directly* with parents' club leadership.

You may occasionally receive information from other unofficial channels and wonder if you should share that information with your members. If you have any doubt about the source or the accuracy of any information, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Parent Liaison Team **first** to verify information and ask questions before sharing with your membership.

USAFA Parents' Liaison Team

Rose "Marie" Nikovits and Carrie Clancy
HQ USAFA/CM 2304 Cadet Drive, Suite 3200
USAFA, CO 80840
Phone: (719) 333-3828 | Toll-Free: 877-268-3383
Email: USAFA.Parents.Liasion@afacademy.af.edu
Webpage: <https://www.usafa.edu/Parents/>

Spirit Committees and Class Facebook Parent Forums

Spirit committees and class Facebook forums are a vital part of the Academy experience and are comprised of cadet parents/guardians.

Class Facebook groups support parents of a specific **class year** as a whole over the four-year journey while attending the Academy. Unlike parents' clubs, these social media forums are not geographical. These are forums with rules of conduct and (some) security in place to provide parents a place to ask questions and post proud

moments and/or concerns. It is a virtual parent support group. These groups are parent-run, but the Parent Liaison Team works very closely with the administrators of the various Facebook pages to quickly answer questions and squash rumors.

The Facebook forums are not intended as alternatives to the parents' clubs but as an additional resource. While social media provides information and fast responses to questions, it does not replace the valuable benefit of meeting and socializing in person. After graduation, many parents continue to visit the Facebook group to share proud moments in their son's or daughter's career in the Air Force or Space Force, and some continue their parents' club memberships too.

Spirit committees

Each class year also has a class spirit committee, which is a 501(c)(3) committee comprised of volunteer parents supporting their cadets' class. Their primary purpose is to support the cadets as they celebrate major milestones of the class – Recognition, Exemplar Dinner, Commitment, and Commission/Graduation.

The spirit committees design, mint, and deliver challenge coins to the Academy for distribution to the cadets at the culmination of the milestone event. In addition, many spirit committees provide a gift at Ring Dance. These tokens are funded by generous parents of the class.

Parents' clubs are independently run (*owned and operated*) locally by parent volunteers who have cadets enrolled at USAFA or are the parents of USAFA graduates. Many of your parents' club members may also hold leadership roles or be a member or an administrator of the Facebook forum and/or spirit committee.

See the **Appendix** for some class Facebook forum links or <https://www.usafa.edu/parents/parent-clubs-spirit-committees/>.

USAFA Association of Graduates and the Academy Foundation

Association of Graduates (AOG)

The AOG is the U.S. Air Force Academy alumni association. Parents can become members of the AOG while their son or daughter is a cadet. Each member, whether a graduate, parent or *friend* of the Academy helps maintain and expand current programs and develop new ones. By signing up for Family Plan or Husky Club Membership, you will receive benefits, such as:

- [WebGuy team of photographers who cover events at USAFA and post photos online](#)
- [AOG Parent and Family App](#) for your mobile device. The AOG Parent and Family App allows parents to have instant information at the touch of their fingertips. This includes a social stream to stay informed and connected.
- AOG Parent Membership Guide is sent to families in June and can also be accessed through AOG Parent and Family App.
- [Zoomie Delivery Service](#) There are also special offers within the AOG Parent Membership Guide for those who are AOG Family Plan Members that are available at the beginning of each academic year.
- 15% discount from Doolittle Outfitters merchandise.
- A portion of every monthly membership payment goes into the Cadet Enrichment Fund, which allows the AOG to fund events and needs of the Cadet Wing to enhance a cadet's journey

- Parents will be awarded AOG life member status upon completion of membership payments before graduation.

Resources:

USAFA AOG Family Plan Membership: <https://www.usafawebguy.com/Membership>

USAFA Prep School Husky Club Membership: <https://www.usafawebguy.com/Membership/HuskyClub>

Membership Benefits: <https://www.usafa.org/membership/benefits>

Membership for all graduates: <https://membership4grads.usafa.org/>. Upon graduation alumni can opt-in for AOG Life Membership at no cost.

Please contact membership@usafa.org for more information.

AOG chapters

AOG chapters are a great resource for parents' clubs as they provide an avenue for you to connect with USAFA graduates in the area. Many parents' clubs will partner with their local AOG chapter to solicit graduate volunteer participation in club events.

Resources:

<https://www.usafa.org/Chapters>

<https://www.usafa.org/News/pchapter2021>

Air Force Academy Foundation

The Air Force Academy Foundation actively works to identify and cultivate key roles and relationships with private philanthropy with current and potential donors to support the Academy.

Vision: To be an association and foundation of influence and impact, supporting the Academy's enduring mission of developing leaders of character for the nation, and providing a lifetime of service to the long blue line.

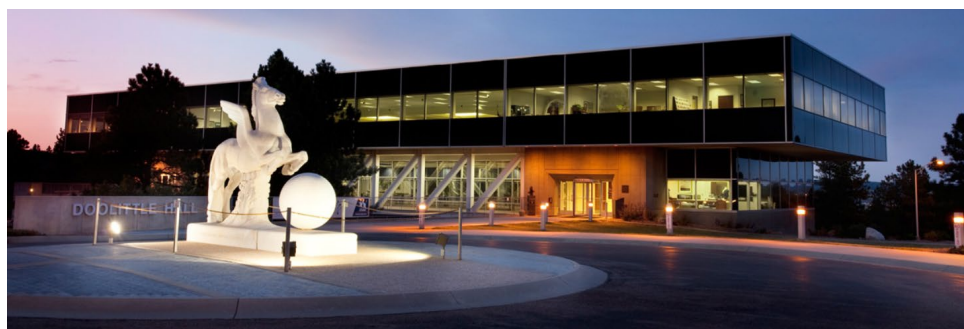
Mission: Together, we support the Academy, serve our graduates, and preserve the heritage of the institution.

3116 Academy Drive

USAF Academy, CO 80840

Phone: (719) 472-0300 Hours: 7:30 am - 4:30 pm

Resource: [Association of Graduates \(AOG\) / Air Force Academy Foundation](#)



Parent Ambassador Program

Parent Ambassadors are an exclusive group of passionate Falcons that are instrumental in supporting parents' clubs and USAFA families in navigating the Academy experience and beyond.

Vision: The Parents' Ambassador Program is an initiative of the Association of Graduates created to continue building engagement and service within the USAFA Parent Clubs and extended family community. All ambassadors share the common goal to empower the USAFA family to do great things for each other, the Academy, and the nation for a lifetime.

Parent ambassadors are former and current parent club leaders who graciously dedicate their time, experience, and resources to the USAFA Parents' Clubs community. This program is part of the AOG Ambassador Program. Parent ambassadors meet monthly with the USAFA Parent Liaison Team and AOG Parent and Family Team to offer insight and suggestions to better support the USAFA parent and family community. They support the parents' club community in many ways such as by facilitating small workshops or serving as presenters at Parent Club Leadership Conferences.

Purpose of Parents' Clubs

The primary mission of a USAFA Parents' Club is to support parents/guardians and their families throughout their cadet's Academy journey.

Parents' clubs are an essential part of the Academy experience as they facilitate official information and communications between the university and cadet parents/guardians. In addition to information dissemination, parents' clubs provide Academy families with an opportunity to connect with other families who are sharing or have already participated in a similar experience. They enable cadet parents to make local connections with other families who are familiar with the USAFA journey.

Clubs can vary in size, scope, and organizational structure. A club's mission is to support the families of cadet candidates, appointees, and cadets. All aspects of how a club functions are solely the responsibilities of the club.

Parents' clubs may:

- Have websites and a social media presence.
- Be informal and meet intermittently for social gathering or support.
- Be comprised of parents/guardians of current or past cadets.
- Be a charitable nonprofit organization 501(C)(3)
- Raise funds through marketplace transactions, including sales of goods bearing approved USAFA branding and logos, etc.
- Host club events such as:
 - Cadet outreach such as sending care packages to cadets.
 - Attend sporting tailgates or watch parties or other casual activities
 - Hold new appointee gatherings or graduation send-offs
 - Raise money for cadet morale activities
 - Military balls
 - Picnics

Clubs may also have bylaws, hold elections, a leadership selection process, have a board, collect membership dues, or any other function needed to run a club. It is up to each club to decide how formal or informal the club will be organized and operated. More detailed information about how clubs can operate and are organized is included in this document under the **Organizational structure, operations, finances, and charitable 501(C)3 status** section.

There are over 85 parents' clubs across the country, as well as parents' clubs for Europe and Guam. There is a [virtual parents' club](#) that families can join if there is not a parents' club in their area.

Parents of our Prep School cadet candidates are eligible to join their local parents' club or the [USAFA Preparatory School Parents' Facebook group](#).

Resources:

<https://www.usafa.edu/parents/parent-clubs-spirit-committees/>

<https://usafavirtualParentsclub.afaParents.org/>

<https://www.usafa.edu/prep-school/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/445661335799830>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1604830596439546>

<https://www.usafa.edu/prep-school/>

Parents' Club Essentials

Clubs are encouraged to coordinate efforts with other Academy organizations in their regional areas to include Academy liaison officers (ALO), AOG, AOG chapters, and USAFA graduates stationed at local Air Force and Space Force bases. These can be key collaborators to leverage as clubs develop welcome events for new appointees and their families before [In-processing -Day](#) each summer.

While your club membership will likely include parents, guardians, and other family members of current USAFA cadets, do not overlook the benefit of keeping families involved even after their cadet has graduated. We find that the strongest clubs have a place for these parents to serve as mentors to help new and current cadet parents deal with the plethora of emotions and planning associated with life at the Academy and beyond.

There is more about this topic in the **Sustainability and resilience — succession planning and processes — membership retention** section.

Resources:

<https://www.usafa.edu/Parents/>

<https://www.usafa.org/Parents>

<https://www.usafa.edu/Parents/Parent-Clubs-spirit-committees/>

<https://usafavirtualParentsClub.afaParents.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/445661335799830>

<https://www.usafa.edu/prep-school/>

Club president registration/information form (required)

Any time there is a change in leadership for your parents' club, please complete the parents' club president information form and return to the Parent Liaison Team. The Parent Liaison Team maintains a roster of all club leadership so information can be disseminated quickly and accurately to the right people.

Resource:

<https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/Parents'-Club-President-Information-Form-fillable.pdf>

Communicating effectively

Effective communication is more than just having dialog or exchanging information. It occurs successfully by using critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and clear intentions, combined with our verbal and nonverbal expressions and astute listening, resulting in mutual comprehension. It requires a clearly conveyed message expressed in such a way that the intended recipients gain full meaning of the message while the listener provides acknowledgement so that the conveyor feels heard and understood. This should be instinctive, but often it is not.

Occasionally, when we attempt to communicate with others, something seems to get lost. We say one thing; the receiving party hears something else, possibly resulting in a misunderstanding that leads to frustration, resulting in a possible conflict without resolution. For many of us, communicating more clearly and effectively requires learning some important skills, whether you are trying to improve your communication skills as a member of your club's leadership or not, learning these skills can enhance your connections with others, build trust and establish mutual respect, and improve teamwork, problem solving, and your overall social and emotional health, all of which makes us better communicators and human beings.

How much and how often should parents' clubs communicate with their members?

The answer is that it varies. There is no set limit, practice, or policy. The best advice is to communicate as often as necessary to get the message out to all club members. Do not be repetitive or overload your members with many messages all at one time. Present the information that needs to be conveyed in a logical and professional fashion. As the information comes in from official sources, determine if it is relevant to your club and simply pass on the information.

As a club leader, you have an obligation to keep your club membership informed and up to date. Everyone has the option to delete or discard the information that is sent to them regardless of whether it is in-person, over the telephone, or sent electronically – email, social media, or via website. Your members will honestly let you know if it is too much or too little. As a parents' club leader, you can take steps to implement the feedback as needed.

Resource:

The link below leads to a presentation that covers effective communications and includes many of the topics presented throughout this handbook. This presentation is a valuable resource for all club leadership and members:

https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/Effective_Communication.pdf

Parents' Club Code of Conduct

It is the responsibility of every parents' club to operate in a professional manner and to treat others with honesty, respect, and dignity. Internal club issues should be addressed by club leadership. The Parent Liaison Team is here to assist clubs in an advisory capacity. Club leaders and members are expected to act in a manner that reflects

highly on themselves, the club, and the U.S. Air Force Academy. The Club Code of Conduct applies to all USAFA parents' clubs regardless of size, structure, nonprofit status, or any other club characteristic.

To foster an environment of respect, clubs and members shall:

Be kind and truthful	Be fair to everyone
Be patient, courteous, and considerate	Model service before self
Be inclusive and respectful	Promote goodwill and foster friendships

Additionally, clubs have the right to expect that all decisions made by the club leaders, committees, and members are made objectively and in the best interests of the club and not for personal reasons or gain.

Clubs should be knowledgeable of and comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including but not limited to complying with laws and regulations related to human resources, financial accountability, taxation, fundraising, trademark protection, and licensing.

Clubs should collaborate with the aim of empowering each other to be their best and acknowledge and assume responsibility for their attitudes and behavior and make corrections if needed. Parents' club leaders shall promote confidence in the club as a parent representative and champion a positive public image and perception of their club, the U.S. Air Force Academy, the Air Force, and the Space Force.

Discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying, retaliation, embarrassment, shunning, or other such behaviors are unacceptable under any circumstance and shall be not tolerated in any club.

Running successful meetings

Remote vs. in-person opportunities

The format for events and meetings is influenced by the geographical area your club covers. For those clubs with a smaller geographic footprint, in-person events and activities are encouraged. For those clubs covering a large geographic area, virtual or hybrid meetings should be considered. In addition, these clubs may consider holding smaller events in multiple areas to better encourage participation and engagement among all members.

Zoom or Microsoft Teams meetings: to coordinate use of these platforms, please email membership@aogusafa.org

Other free platforms are available: www.freeconferencecall.com

Club leadership transition

To keep the parents engaged and active, provide an opportunity for members to serve in a variety of leadership positions. New leaders oftentimes can bring new ideas and can encourage members to become more engaged. Consider placing new USAFA families in supporting roles (i.e., committee members) while they learn about the USAFA journey and how your club functions.

See the **succession planning and processes** section below and/or reference your club's bylaws for specific details. There is no single — best— and only way to run a USAFA Parents' Club. The list below includes suggestions and best practices that have been gathered over the years from many clubs:

- Hold elections at the same time every year. Do not allow one person to stay in a position year after a year without a member vote.
- Plan for transitions:
- An outgoing leader may wish to mentor an incoming leader through a portion of their term in a leadership role.
- Elect a president-elect.
- Set term limits. We recommend two-to-three-year terms for all officers; however, officers may transition each year or on different cycles as needed.
- Election of officers and board members can be accomplished by the board or by members. Some clubs prefer to have the entire board up for election at one time. This is not recommended because it could result in no incumbents being elected and in turn, the board having no institutional memory. Some clubs find it beneficial for the board members' elections to be staggered. So, some leadership positions would be elected this year, while others would be elected the following year, and some the following year. Clubs would need to track the start and ending dates for each position. This is especially important if the club has term limits and/or uses a board member to fill the vacancy of an office.
- Some clubs use nominating committees. The bylaws should describe how they are formed, who is eligible to serve, who is not eligible to serve, how they conduct business, and any deadlines. Some club boards choose the nominating committee; others have the membership choose the nominating committee at the annual meeting or by ballot. Some clubs may allow nominations from the floor. The bylaws should provide how members may submit their names for a position if not nominated by the nominating committee. The process and the deadline must be detailed in the bylaws.
- Regardless of club size or other attributes, attrition will naturally occur; therefore, it is recommended that you follow your club's by-laws. If your club does not have established bylaws, you are free to establish them or follow the best practices of any other club (USAFA Parents' Clubs or otherwise).
- Delegate major event and program planning to club members (nonofficers, new members) with the intent that they will become leaders or officers. You may also delegate tasks to former officers or form committees consisting of members to support. Encourage members to be involved in organizing or volunteering for programs and events.
- Define your officer structure, volunteer job descriptions, term limits, and succession in your club by-laws.
- Survey the interests, skills, and resources of your members.
- Identify whom to turn to for help.
- Host an event with members to discuss new ideas.
- Evaluate your events to gauge success.
- Focus efforts on programs that are sustainable through leadership transition.

Resource: https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/Updated_Best-Practices_Handout.pdf

Club Creation (Starting/Restarting a Club)

Clubs are run by parents for parents. Clubs are only able to remain viable if there are volunteers ready and willing to step into leadership roles. If there is not an active parents' club in your area, and there are committed parents willing to establish a parents' club, reach out to the [Parents' Liaison Team](#) for guidance and support to take those first steps.

- The group of parent volunteers should decide how they want to be organized, whether they want to keep it simple as a social club or if they want to be more organized and establish a set of operating procedures.
- The best advice is to start small and grow the club over time. Many of the established clubs choose to register as a 501(C)3 charitable organization with fundraising capabilities.
- Will the club want to establish and maintain a social media profile, a website, or an electronic file storage and sharing space for club documentation? Or will the club simply communicate via email and telephone contact?
- The group will need to decide when and how often they will meet, where they will meet, whether or not meetings can only be held in-person, or if video teleconferencing is appropriate.
- The club will need to decide what events or activities they will hold during the year and if they will be involved with the community. The best recommendation is to follow the [academic calendar](#), and stay in tune with Academy and cadet activities and events. There is more information in the **guiding parents' clubs through the annual Academy experience** section of this handbook.
- The club will also need to establish an operating budget and determine if there will be membership dues and define a purpose for those monies. The club may need to establish subcommittees. Will there be a board or elections for held offices, e.g., president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, etc., or will there be a selection process? Formal clubs usually have a set of [bylaws](#) and generally follow the [Roberts Rules of Order](#), which is highly recommended for all sized clubs no matter how formal or informal.
- Will your club need a designated club email address and decide who will monitor and maintain it? As the club is established and leadership roles and responsibilities defined, the club will naturally find its way and evolve.

Do not be overwhelmed! The [Parents' Liaison Team](#) can help you, and you can always reach out to other clubs for advice. We are a team!

Resources:

<https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/Parents'-Club-Start-Up-or-Restart.pdf>
<https://www.manchestercc.edu/students/depot/activities/Roberts%20Rules%20Of%20Order.pdf>
https://diphi.web.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2645/2012/02/MSG-ROBERTS_RULES_CHEAT_SHEET.pdf
<https://usafavirtualParents'Club.afaParents'.org/Parents'-conference-documents.html>
<http://www.southwestohio.afaparents.org/by-laws.html>
<https://www.usafapcmi.com/uploads/1/0/9/3/109362621/bylaws-revised-march-14-2014.pdf>
<https://www.usafa.edu/academics/academic-calendar/>

The following link leads to a presentation that not only covers starting or restarting a parents' club but dives deep into all the topics of this reference guide and resource kit. This presentation is a valuable resource for new club leaders.

<https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/USAFA-2021-Club-startup.pdf>

You are the Club President – Now What?

Networking and educational opportunities

The Parent Liaison Team works hard to provide you with the resources you need to successfully step into your new leadership role. There are numerous training opportunities available and many ways for you to network with fellow parents' club leaders.

How the USAFA AOG Parent Ambassador Mentorship Program serves you

The mentorship program provides a platform of education and support by encouraging parents' club mentors to engage in meaningful educational, informational, and developmental activities to better support the parents' clubs.

The USAFA AOG Parents' Club mentors help clubs succeed in their own clubs' mission and goals by:

- Improving club success and continued service to the community
- Helping to foster positive behaviors, and when needed, serving as a partner to generate solutions to overcome adversity
- Encouraging and increasing participation from local families
- Building confidence on club value

For more information on becoming a parents' club mentor or if you would like information on having a mentor assist you and your club, please email membership@usafa.org.

Parents' Club President Conferences (New Club Presidents' Training)

Each year, the Parent Liaison Team hosts two conferences for parents' club presidents/leadership. Typically, a conference is held a couple days before [Parents' Weekend](#) in the fall semester. A second conference geared toward new parents' club leaders is held during the spring semester, as this is the traditional timeframe when club leadership is transitioning.

These conferences are designed to provide parents' club leaders with an opportunity to convene as one team, to become well-informed of current events and programs, to collaborate and share best practices, and to network. By connecting, communicating, and supporting one another, we can maximize the impact and success of parents' clubs while also becoming stronger ambassadors for USAFA.

Attending these conferences will assist you with understanding the "big picture" and help you to broker Academy information and facilitate better understanding for your club's parents/guardians.

Virtual training

In addition to Parents' Club Leadership Training Conferences, the USAFA Parent Liaison Team will also provide virtual training opportunities. Training is usually held via Microsoft Teams or Zoom and will be recorded and posted on the Parent Club Leadership webpage.

Resource: <https://www.usafa.edu/Parents'/Parents-Club-leadership/>

Parents' Club Presidents Facebook Group

Now that you are a club president, it is essential that you get plugged in and get access to the [Facebook USAFA Parents' Club President Community group page](#). Here, you will have an opportunity to network with other club presidents and the Parent Liaison Team. It is a great place to exchange ideas, gain information, and stay connected with the happenings at USAFA. It collectively covers a lot of the questions and concerns that stem from operating a club. It is a great resource for both new leadership and those who have experience.

Resource: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Parents'ClubPresidentCommunity>

The Key Components of Parents' Clubs

Regardless of club size, organizational structure, or any other club attribute, the following seven areas of responsibility are the essential topics for establishing, leading, and running a successful club.

1. Operational and personal security
2. Membership roster
3. Official USAFA news and information dissemination
4. Sustainability and resilience
5. Organizational structure and operations
6. Finances and charitable 501(c)3 status
7. Events and activities

1. Operational and Personal Security

As a leader of your respective club, you will manage club rosters that contain appointees, cadets, and parents' contact information. Always keep in mind that the information you are responsible for as a club leader is to be treated with strict confidentiality and should only be used for the purposes of USAFA and club business, activities, and events. This applies to all appointees, cadets, and parents/guardians (families).

OPSEC — Operational security is a security and risk management process that prevents sensitive information from getting into the wrong hands. OPSEC is both a process and a strategy to conduct business, and it encourages those who manage sensitive information to view their club operations and systems from the perspective of a potential attacker. It includes analytical activities and processes like behavior monitoring, social media monitoring, and security-best practices. OPSEC is a process (a habit) that identifies innocuous actions that could inadvertently reveal critical or sensitive information to a cybercriminal or anyone who can be considered a bad actor who intends to use the sensitive information for unintended purposes.

PERSEC — Personal security has become increasingly more critical, considering the risks involved by using the internet, especially with the large number of military support message boards available today. While it may appear to be a safe electronic community with military members, remember, nothing can ever be guaranteed 100% secure. For this reason, you should always safeguard your club members' personal information. Just as you would not advertise your social security number online, you should not alert everyone to your club members' personal information either.

While we may not fully realize that our club's families, appointees, or cadets' information may be used in nefarious ways, it could be used in a threat, by sharing their home address, telephone numbers, email addresses, or a travel itinerary while on leave (breaks) or on active duty. Ensure and practice confidentiality and privacy when using the roster information and conducting club business, particularly when using electronic communications technology platforms. Keep in mind, it is all hackable, and the fraudsters are always at work.

Information, including posts and comments pertaining to appointees, cadets, and families, is sensitive and confidential in nature. It can not only put them at risk, but it can also impact USAFA, the Air Force and Space Force, and our military at large. Although our adult children are attending the Academy now, they will commission and serve on active duty after graduation.

- Follow OPSEC and PERSEC guidelines. Do not publicly share USAFA wing, squadron, or other information.
- Encourage all your club members to do the same.
- Raise OPSEC and PERSEC awareness and education in your club. This also applies post-graduation to Air Force and Space Force Specialty Codes (AFSCs/SFSCs) – job assignments, Permanent Change of Station

(PCS) – troop movements or change of duty or training stations, temporary duty locations (TDYs), and names, ranks, units, etc.

- When emailing club members, it is recommended that you use undisclosed recipients/BCC (blind carbon copy) to disseminate official information.

Resources:

<https://www.militaryspot.com/resources/opsec-and-persec>

<https://milsponsefest.com/the-msf-military-pocket-guide-opsec-and-persec/>

2. Membership Roster

CUI — Controlled Unclassified Information and the Limited Dissemination Distribution Control List

Appointees, cadets, cadet candidates and parents/guardians must give permission for their personal information to be shared with parents' clubs and spirit committees. The Parent Liaison Team tracks these releases and will only share information released for these purposes. The Parent Liaison Team will maintain rosters for each active class at USAFA that will contain parent/guardian/cadet controlled unclassified information for those individuals that have signed releases. This means that clubs may not get contact information for every cadet that attends USAFA if the cadet and the family have not released their information.

Appointees will release their information to parents' clubs and spirit committees when completing their appointee kit. Parents/guardians must complete an information release form and return to the Parent Liaison Team to release their information. An appointee/cadet/cadet candidate cannot release their parents'/guardians' information.

These rosters can be sorted by state to help parents' clubs identify USAFA families and cadets in their geographical area. This is a great resource to help clubs build their membership roster. Collaborate with your neighboring parents' clubs to make sure all USAFA families are supported and contacted. It is up to the new parents on which parents' club(s) they wish to join. Some may join more than one or join another state's club if that parents' club is closer to them. Keep in mind that families can choose to join any parents' club and sometimes, due to the location of nearest metro area, it makes sense for a family to join a club in a neighboring state rather than their home state. Bottom line — we want all families to be supported!

If a USAFA family contacts your club, but they are not listed on the Parent Liaison-provided CUI roster, direct them to the website so they can complete an information release form: [Parent / Guardian Release Form](#). This will allow the Parent Liaison Team to verify information and add the family to the appropriate master roster.

The Parent Liaison Team will send out CUI rosters monthly (often more frequently leading up to I-Day when the incoming class roster is being built). They will track disenrollments, medical turnbacks, etc., and will update rosters as cadet status changes. Please pay attention to these changes so you can support your families in an appropriate manner.

It is recommended that you maintain an overall club membership roster at large and add additional tabs or spreadsheets that pertain to each class year so that you can manage parents' email addresses by class year.

Leaders cannot release any personal information to all members in your parents' club without a separately signed release by the cadet and parent specifically giving permission to release their information to all members of the parents' club.

Resources:

<https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/Parent-Information-Release-for-Parents-Clubs.pdf>

<https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/PrivacyActParentsClubs.pdf>

[https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/Parents' Guardian Release Form.pdf](https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/Parents'_Guardian_Release_Form.pdf)

3. Official USAFA News and Information Distribution

Digital code of conduct

Ensure that all club members using digital platforms, of any type, abides by principles and standards that foster a respectful and inclusive environment. All club electronic communications bar political topics, the fraudulent use of personal information, pornographic or sexual content of any kind, and anything that is deemed inappropriately outlined by your club's bylaws.

Email etiquette and privacy

When sending emails to members, be sure to use **the blind carbon copy (BCC) – (undisclosed recipients)** line to prevent your intended recipients' inboxes from being flooded with "reply-all" responses. This is especially important when using a CUI roster provided by the USAFA Parent Liaison Team. Additionally, using the BCC prevents the list from being visible to others, thus complying with OPSEC and PERSEC.

Netiquette

Netiquette refers to Internet guidelines that advise people on how to communicate and treat others with respect and dignity when interacting online. These guidelines can apply to multiple aspects of the internet, such as email, message forums and video chats, in addition to websites or social media platforms. Practicing netiquette is practicing etiquette because both involve interacting with others respectfully. However, the rules for netiquette are specific to online communication.

Clubs may opt to create websites (secure) or social media (closed) group pages to promote their club and associated events and activities. The AOG membership team will assist your club in providing a weebly website and training. Please reach out to weeblysupport@usafa.org for assistance with that process.

If a club wishes to do so, consider the following guidelines:

- Observe OPSEC and PERSEC.
- Be real, and always use your best judgment when posting.
- Do not use inappropriate or offensive language or images.
- Do not pick fights or engage with others in ways that are aggressive or unprofessional. Likewise, you are welcome to block those who do.
- Refrain from posting content that is critical of the United States Air Force Academy, its leadership, the chain of command (to include the POTUS), academics, athletics, alumni, your parents' club or members, cadets, USAF, USSF, or any other military service branch.

Resources:

<https://www.verywellmind.com/ten-rules-of-netiquette-22285>

<https://www.cybersmile.org/advice-help/category/netiquette>

4. Sustainability and Resilience

Succession planning and processes

The health of a club often depends on a consistent flow of new volunteer parents moving into leadership roles from year to year. Beyond the need to simply recruit new parents, a concerted effort must be made for developing volunteer leaders in a pipeline, so they have the recommended time and experience to take on larger leadership roles in service of the club. While succession planning is a formal responsibility of the president and vice president, every club leader should have a hand in developing future parents' club leaders.

Membership attrition – mentoring and succession

In the spirit of collaboration and mutual support, the USAFA Parents' Liaison Team encourages established affiliate groups to mentor emerging ones. This collaborative practice allows new parents' clubs or reestablished ones to benefit from the experiences and insights of their established counterparts, fostering a supportive environment. While more seasoned parents' clubs can provide real working advice and assistance to new parents' clubs, the Parents' Liaison Team can assist in guiding new or recreated parents' clubs through their formation process, ensuring a smooth and well-informed journey. We highly recommend that new parents' clubs actively seek and lean on the support and advice of existing clubs, creating a strong network of shared knowledge and resources that benefits their membership.

Here is an example of successful pipeline building:

- A new parent expresses interest in helping the club
- A parent is asked to join a committee to make a measured, focused impact
- After one or two years, that parent transitions into the committee chair or board member roles

Establishing committees may also help the parents' club meet its goals and support operations. Securing volunteers for subcommittee service (short-term and longer-term projects) will build your pipeline for future volunteer leaders.

Membership retention – alumni and prior club parents

Parents of USAFA alumni are a valuable resource for every parent's club. The extent to which individual parents' clubs utilize their alumni members may be limited by club bylaws (i.e., are alumni parents able to hold board positions or fulfill other roles?) Not only do they serve a critical role in providing a historical reference for events, but they can be key volunteers for parents' club events. Alumni parents may mentor incoming appointee families, coordinate/volunteer at club events or at Parents' Weekend booths (allowing families of current cadets the opportunity to be with their son/daughter).

Consider creating an alumni liaison board position. This may be a non-voting position on the Executive Board. Their role is to reach out to the alumni and keep them involved. This can be accomplished via emails, events, and Zoom/Microsoft Teams calls. The alumni liaison may also coordinate in June at a meeting where alumni can share with the new Firstie parents what to expect after graduation and beyond.

5. Organizational Structure and Operations

Your specific club can be as complex and formal or simplistic and informal as the membership desires. The link below leads to a presentation that not only covers a parents' club infrastructure but dives deep into other topics of this handbook. This presentation is a valuable consideration for any club leader. It was presented by Tammie Quest from the Georgia Parents Club and Mark Hamilton of the Inland Empire Association and the USAFA Virtual Parents' Club in 2021.

Resource: <https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/USAFA-2021-Infrastructure.pdf>

Leadership positions: roles and responsibilities

Your individual club may or may not be organized and structured as outlined below; however, the following are examples and/or suggestions of some usual club leadership positions, roles, and functions. The examples below are intended to highlight the typical roles and responsibilities that clubs generally hold and execute. It is important to note that club size varies and regardless of your club's particular size, most of the basic roles and responsibilities apply to all clubs. The club leadership team represents all members of the club and must be able to effectively communicate, grow membership, promote the club, and the USAFA experience through coordinating with local area Academy-affiliated organizations if possible. Again, a club's mission is to support the club's parents and their families – supporting the cadets.

Resource: [USAFA Parents' Club Leadership](#)

Club Executives – Board of Directors

President (chair)

Your board's president is your board's supervisor in many ways. In addition to facilitating board meetings and encouraging other board members to actively participate, the board president is also typically the primary point of contact that represents the club, working closely with the USAFA Parents' Liaison Team and the local community.

- Oversee club operations, development, and financial health, manage club officers, and serve as liaison with the [Parents' Liaison Team](#)
- Presides at all meetings of the executive board and general membership
- Acts as the club's representative for USAFA functions, events, and activities
- Creates and maintains the club's email addresses to communicate with members
- Serves as the primary point of contact between the Academy and the club
- Administers and monitors the club's email, providing communication services to members
- Interfaces with local politicians (congressional representatives and senators)
- When applicable, addresses and mediates board member conflicts
- May represent the club when approached by the media or other groups

Resources:

<https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/CM-Slide-Deck-Appointee-Parents-Brief-2023.pdf>

<https://www.usafa.edu/Parents/Parents-Club-leadership/>

<https://www.usafa.edu/about/traditions/Parents-weekend/>

<https://www.usafawebguy.com/>

Vice president (vice chair)

The vice president will fill in for the president as needed, so the club is never without leadership. Many clubs utilize this position to groom the next president. It is a great way for a future president to spend time in learning the roles and responsibilities while serving side by side with the current leadership.

Additional duties may include:

- Assist and collaborate with the president regarding club management & affairs. The member in this position has the potential to become the next president
- Acts on behalf of the president in his/her absence
- Leads subcommittees and collaborates with members
- Obtains approval for USAFA branding and logo for club usage. Respect intellectual property rights

There is more information about USAFA branding in the **Copyright images and content USAFA Trademark Licensing Program, and protected marks** section below.

Secretary

The secretary accurately records and maintains meeting attendance and minutes for each board meeting. The following responsibilities can help the club avoid liability issues or other common pitfalls. Keeps board calendar, formalities, and arranges and organizes meetings.

- Maintains club records, including bylaws, event calendar, communication to members, and meeting minutes.

Bylaws (club constitution)

Formal clubs usually have a set of [bylaws](#) or a constitution and generally follow the [Roberts Rules of Order](#), which is highly recommended for all sized clubs no matter how formal or informal.

Resources:

Agenda Template Example:

<https://usafavirtualParentsClub.afaParents.org/Parent-conference-documents.html>

Bylaws:

<https://usafavirtualParentsClub.afaParents.org/Parent-conference-documents.html>

Roberts Rules of Order:

<https://www.manchestercc.edu/students/depot/activities/Roberts%20Rules%20Of%20Order.pdf>

<http://www.southwestohio.afaparents.org/by-laws.html>

Treasurer

The treasurer is the one responsible for managing the organization's budget and records of receipts and disbursements. While the treasurer is not required to be an accountant, this person should have experience in keeping track of financials and be the organization's point of accountability — even if the bookkeeping is outsourced. This person is usually one of the signatories for the bank accounts.

- Manages club finances – maintains accounting records, which include expenditures, revenues, disbursements, and reimbursements

- Establishes and maintains the operating budget
- Collects and ensures that membership dues are paid up and current (if applicable)
- Manages all tax matters and charitable contributions

IT and communications administrator (VP, communications)

- Uses the club's email address to communicate with members
- Establishes virtual use of technology for meetings (Zoom/Teams, etc.)
- Coordinates with the other club leadership to create, maintain, distribute, and publish club information, events, activities, etc.
- Communicates USAFA and club information to all club members (past, current, and prospective members) to provide a system of mutual support

Web master/social media

Updates and maintains the parents' club website, social media, printed materials, flyers, newsletters, etc.

AOG can help establish a club website: weeblysupport@usafa.org

Example of an AOG-hosted website: <https://usafavirtualParentsClub.afaParents.org/>

At-large and general membership positions

Parents' clubs may also offer a variety of opportunities for their members to be involved with club activities. This is a great way to keep members active and to maintain a solid pipeline of volunteers for future leadership roles.

Some possible roles/positions may include:

Committee chair (Fundraising)	Spirit committee
Social chair	Class representatives
Sporting events coordinator	Military ball representative
Attending or participatory members	Alumni-liaison
Merchandise Team	Advisory – past president
Honorary members (non-voting)	

Newsletters

Some clubs choose to provide a monthly update/newsletter to their members. Reach out to other clubs for an example of their newsletter format.

6. Finances and charitable 501(C)3 status

This is not mandatory. Not every club needs to be or should be a nonprofit charitable organization. Your club can be as formal and complex or informal and simplistic as the membership chooses.

501(C)3 (nonprofit) status

Your parent club may be interested in soliciting donations or sponsorships for various events. To qualify for these opportunities and to provide an acknowledgement for them, clubs must have 501(c)(3) status. For information on establishing a 501(c)(3) for your club, please visit the IRS website at <https://www.irs.gov/charities-nonprofits/how-to-apply-for-501c3-status>. If your club obtains 501(c)(3) status, please inform the USAFA Parent Liaison Team. Additional Information pertaining to donations is in the FAQ's below.

Financial accountability: guidance, bank accounts, and liability insurance

As an independent and separate entity, parents' clubs have several options for managing their finances. Parents' clubs shall not portray themselves as fundraising entities acting on behalf of the U.S. Air Force Academy, the AOG and the Academy Foundation. If your club chooses to set up a bank account to manage club finances, ensure you have another board member other than the treasurer on the account. This ensures transparency for club members and protects club funds. It is up to the discretion of the parents' club to determine the bank that best fits its needs. In addition, when there is a change in leadership, the parents' club should work with the bank to transfer access privileges to the new parents' club leadership in a timely manner.

Because parents' clubs are independently owned and operated, separate from the Academy, they are not protected by an insurance policy. It is up to the parents' club to have an insurance policy in place to protect the club and its members from legal action. The insurance secured by the parents' club should include language that indicates independence from all aspects of the Academy. One source for event liability insurance is the Philadelphia Insurance Companies: <https://www.phly.com/products/SpecialEventsIns.aspx>. The information provided through this link includes the key benefits and other FAQ's that address items of interest. You may use this link to obtain a policy for your event.

Resources

[Ethics for Parents – Supporting Cadets Legally](#)

[Fundraising Briefing](#)

[2021 Fundraising Request Letter](#)

[2021 Fundraising Checklist](#)

<https://www.irs.gov/charities-nonprofits/charitable-organizations/exemption-requirements-501c3-organizations>

<https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/Scott-Damon-501c3-Overview-Briefing.pdf>

<https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/501c3-Helpful-Links-Handout.pdf>

<https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/Cadet-Wing-Leadership-Morale-Fund-Initiative.pdf>

7. Events and Activities

Parents' clubs are encouraged to hold a variety of events to build engagement and connections among club members. While there is no minimum or maximum number of events/activities a parents' club must have, the more varied they are generally results in greater participation and impact. Be creative in the types of events that will attract and involve all parents' club members, to include parents of graduates and appointees. This inclusive and welcoming mindset will greatly impact member retention and recruiting.

Parents' club events may include one or more of the following components:

- Outreach – Provide local support to club parents and cadets visiting your geographical area for USAFA club or athletic events.
- Education – Share updates and information provided by the USAFA Parent Liaison Team with your club members.
- Social – Encourage connection and camaraderie among club members and the local and USAFA community.
- Networking – Encourage and/or develop communication with local Air Force and Space Force installations, admissions liaison officers, and Association of Graduate chapters in your area.

- Philanthropic – Volunteering in the local community as a parent with a cadet attending USAFA.

At a minimum, we recommend that parents' clubs have:

- Two general membership meetings each year
- Two social events during the academic year – one per semester
 - Such as attending a watch party or conducting a sports tailgate
- Two cadet outreach/support events, such as appointee events, grad send-off events, or packing/sending cadet care packages during the Dark Ages

Guiding parents' clubs through the annual Academy experience

Types of club events

Clubs typically focus on the following events, but this list is not exhaustive. As previously mentioned, be creative and implement activities that generate excitement and enthusiasm for parents and members. Engage local businesses and other organizations, especially those that may have an Air Force, Space Force or military affiliation or connection. Partner with local elected officials, particularly with congressional and senatorial representatives, and veterans' organizations such as the VFW, American Legion, etc.

Appointee welcomes and senior sendoffs (or hail and farewell)

Many clubs have a pre-I-Day send-off for new appointees that may be combined with a congratulatory activity for the recent USAFA graduates and now newly commissioned second lieutenants. Other clubs may have two separate events for appointees and new graduates. These events vary from club to club, but often include USAFA Admissions liaison officers and current cadets who may be on the first summer break and can answer questions from new appointees and their parents. The event allows the appointees the opportunity to meet their classmates and families before I-Day and welcome the new families to the club and USAFA parents' community. These events naturally occur in May/June, two to four weeks before I-Day.

Sporting events and tailgates supporting all Falcons

Consider hosting a tailgate for your club membership at Parents' Weekend. (The USAFA Taste of Home Midwest Region has hosted a joint tailgate that encompasses many state clubs in previous years.)

The USAFA Parent Liaison Team will also share a calendar of events for USAFA clubs and sport teams that are traveling to events/competitions. Show your club's support of the greater USAFA family by gathering your local families to attend events in your area. Reach out to your local AOG chapter to gather support from the graduate community as well.

Often, parents that have intercollegiate cadet (IC's) athletes participating in NCAA sports join both the local parents' club and a parent community for the team/club.

Resources:

<https://goairforcefalcons.com/Athletics-at-a-Different-Altitude>
<https://www.usafa.edu/prep-school/athletics/>

Cadet Clubs
2354 Fairchild Dr, Suite 4A20
USAFA, CO 8084
cadet.clubs@afacademy.af.edu
<https://www.usafa.edu/cadet-life/clubs/>

Watch parties

Schedule watch parties to support the Air Force Falcons, especially for service academy and bowl games. These can be informal events at a club member's home, sports bar, other venue. Occasionally, clubs join with the local AOG chapter and coordinate this together in support of the Falcons.

Barbecues/potlucks/catered/dine-in gatherings

Food is always a wonderful way to socialize and get parents together, no matter the reason or occasion, regardless of venue.

Goodie box/cookie packing events

These types of events are frequently held in conjunction with a club meeting or a watch party. Some clubs will provide shipping boxes and cover the cost of shipping while members donate items to be included in the boxes. Other clubs find it more cost-effective to send a few gift cards instead of a care package. Reach out to other clubs for their best practices and what they have found works best for them.

Golf tournaments, bowling, and other activities

Clubs engage in all types of fun activities. From movie nights to Bunco or bingo events, to hosting a larger event (i.e., golf tournament) as a fundraiser, these events add value to club membership and foster friendship among members.

Military balls

Military balls, typically held near a service branch's birthday, are commonplace on active duty. Many parents' clubs keep this tradition alive by collaborating with other service academy parents' clubs in their state/area to host an All-Service Academy Ball over the winter break. Often, the different service academy parents' groups rotate hosting/planning responsibility from year to year. Reach out to other parents' clubs to see how this works in their state.

Resources:

<https://www.militarytimes.com/native/pioneer-services/2015/09/11/do-s-and-dont-s-of-military-balls-and-formals/>
<https://www.thesoldiersproject.org/what-is-a-military-ball/>

Year in Review: An example of a monthly breakdown for club and cadet events

The following month-to-month layout highlights some of the “usual” activities that parents’ clubs may host over a calendar year. It is only an example.

MAY

- Send an email with your club information to new appointees and parents
- Send out hail and farewell invitations
- C2C have ring dance
- USAFA Prep School graduation
- C1C graduation and 60 days of leave

JUNE

- Distribute copies of the calendar of club events for the upcoming year
- Host a Hail and farewell – Welcome appointee families and congratulate families of graduates
- Get an idea of how many parents will attend the football game at Parents Weekend
- Email USAFA I-Day forms/information after hail and farewell
- Start selling Club merchandise while at hail and farewell, if applicable
- Conduct a conference call for 4-degree parents (after hail and farewell) regarding I Day
- After conference call, email conference call info, membership form, calendar of events

JULY

- Reach out to incoming Prep School families prior to Prep I-Day and beginning of Basic Military Training (BMT)
- Conduct another conference call (before Acceptance Day) regarding Basic Cadet Day, Jacks Valley, August and September
- Email the conference call notes, map for Acceptance Day Parade
- Email non-members (potential members) to join club deadline, calendar
- Prep BMT Graduation

AUGUST

- Acceptance Day (A-Day) for basics and commitment dinner for C2C's
- Send out email regarding A-Day to Club Members
- Potluck Social at a member's home (sign up for volunteer slot)
- Email social minutes to members
- Email Parents' Weekend map, information, and stadium map
- Email members after A-Day any links to help them

SEPTEMBER

- Parents Weekend
- Send out information about golf scramble. Hold conference call if applicable

OCTOBER

- C3C Exemplar Dinner
- Care packages get sent out/a members host this event
- Send out minutes from care package social
- Email golf stuff and do golf conference call
- Fall cadet goodie boxes

NOVEMBER

- Thanksgiving break

DECEMBER

- C2C's pick class ring
- Holiday social
- All military balls

JANUARY

- Conference call for senior parents
- Conference call for Sunshine Night
- Email minutes for both
- Send out ring incentive

FEBRUARY

- Dark Ages cadet goodie boxes
- C1C's 100's Night.
- Email about recognition.
- Email to parents for info about new cadets in area and local high schools.
- Secure a location for hail and farewell.

MARCH/APRIL

- Meeting to recap the year and get Junior & Sophomore parents to take over for a year
- Email minutes from meeting
- May – The annual cycle repeats

Annual cadet events and the academic calendar

The USAFA Parent Liaison Team will share an updated important dates list and the current academic calendar as events/milestones are approved. It is helpful to plan club events that support your membership as their cadets experience each milestone.

Refer your USAFA families to the official parent website where they can find the most up-to-date information on the milestones related to their cadet's class year.

Resources:

<https://www.usafa.edu/academics/academic-calendar/>
<https://www.usafa.edu/cadet-life/>
<https://www.usafa.edu/about/traditions/>

USAFA cadets by class year (milestones from appointee to graduation)

Cadet 4th Class — Freshmen — (4-degrees or C4C)

In-Processing (I-Day)

I-Day is the designated day appointees report for duty at the United States Air Force Academy toward becoming a 2nd lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force or U.S. Space Force. There is usually a free I-Day Picnic for family and friends hosted by the Colorado Parents' Club. RSVP is required.

Basic Cadet Training (BCT)

The first of many challenges at the U.S. Air Force Academy is Basic Cadet Training (BCT). This is a six-week indoctrination program to guide the transformation of new cadets, also known as basic cadets, from being civilians to military academy cadets prepared to enter a four-year officer commissioning program. With a commitment to pushing physical, emotional and mental limits. Basic cadets will develop into highly disciplined, physically fit 4-degree cadets (freshman), ready to be accepted into the Cadet Wing.

Basic Cadet Training is split into two distinct phases: First Beast and Second Beast.

BCT 1 – First Beast

First BCT takes place in the cadet area under the instruction of upper-class cadets, focusing on the transition from civilian to military life. Military customs and courtesies, the cadet Honor Code, Air Force heritage and room inspections may be new areas of study for most, but all cadets are assessed on their knowledge and must demonstrate proficiency in drill, rifle-manual competitions, and parades. During Field Day, squadrons compete against each other in events to evaluate teamwork, such as distance races, log relays, and tug-of-war. These activities, when combined with daily physical conditioning, prepare cadets to tackle the physical and mental demands of the second phase of BCT, the academic year and life in the Air Force.

BCT 2 – Second Beast

March out to Jacks Valley

Second BCT expands upon the military and physical preparation of First BCT, taking cadets to Jacks Valley, a 3,300-acre rural training area on Academy grounds. Cadets march to and from Jacks Valley, where activities push their physical limits to build self-confidence and teamwork skills. Second BCT also introduces cadets to small-unit tactics and firearms. It concludes with the Acceptance Parade, marking the transition into the academic year and acceptance of new 4-degree class cadets into the Cadet Wing. In a ceremony associated with the parade, the newly minted 4-degree cadets culminate the intensive BCT core values, honor, ethics, and human relations training by taking the Academy's Honor Code Oath and pledging to live by its principles. It is the end of a rigorous six weeks, but only the beginning of the new and different challenges that each succeeding year at the Academy will bring.

March Back from Jack's Valley

Basic Cadet Day Out

Basic Cadet Day Out, formerly known as Doolie Day Out, is an annual event where basic cadets spend a day with families in the Colorado Springs community. Sponsor families invite one or more basic cadets to their homes, providing them meals, some downtime, and the opportunity to call home at the cadet's expense/using their own cell phones. *Basic Cadet Day Out is NOT intended for parents/family members to come to visit the basic cadets, so please DO NOT plan a trip to Colorado Springs to see them that day.*

Acceptance Day

Acceptance Day and Parade (A-Day) is the day when cadets successfully complete BCT and are officially welcomed into the Cadet Wing and transitioned into their new academic squadrons. Guests are allowed to attend and observe the parade from the Stillman Parade Field stands and normally are allowed to spend a short amount of time with their cadets following the parade.

Cadet 3rd Class — Sophomore — (3-degree or C3C)

Squadron Shuffle

As cadets begin their 3-degree year, they in-process to a new squadron. The assigned squadron becomes their permanent squadron for their remaining three years at the Academy. This change is sometimes referred to as the upperclassman shuffle.

Exemplar Dinner

During the fall semester, three-degree (sophomore) cadets select and honor their class exemplar who becomes the honorary class leader and namesake. Since the Class of 2000, each class has chosen someone who “exemplifies” the type of person the class wishes to emulate. The 3-degree celebrate this selection at a formal Exemplar Dinner with their graduated Legacy Class members in attendance.

Resource: <https://www.usafa.edu/parents/sophomore-junior-year/>

Cadet 2nd Class — Junior — (2-degree or C2C)

Commitment Dinner

Commitment Dinner is usually held the day before classes start. Once the cadets return to the Academy for their 2-degree year, they incur the financial or active duty “commitment” for their education if they depart the Academy before graduation. This profound commitment to the Air Force or Space Force is celebrated with a formal dinner. The Class Spirit Committee collaborates with the Cadet Wing to give each cadet a coin to honor the event.

Ring Dance

This formal ball is exclusively for two-degree (junior) cadets. It is usually held prior to Graduation Week, before the two-degree cadets become first-class cadets, and is where they receive their class rings. The rings are traditionally placed in a glass of champagne and are caught in the teeth following a toast. Academy rings are

unique because they are made with white gold, instead of the yellow gold used at other service academies. Designed by each class, one side of the ring bears the Academy crest, while the other side bears the class crest, which always includes elements from the Class of 1959's crest: the class number, the class year, the Polaris Star, and the eagle.

Resource: <https://www.usafa.edu/parents/sophomore-junior-year/>

Cadet 1st Class — Senior —(Firsties)

Job Drop

Sometime between September and December, Firsties will find out their Air Force or Space Force Specialty Code! Months earlier, they submitted their top three rated jobs (pilot being the most requested) and top three non-rated jobs (intel is the most requested). The traditional Job Drop occurs in each squadron and usually includes games, scavenger hunts or other activities to reveal their selected job.

100's Night

100's night for the first-degree (senior) cadets takes place approximately 100 nights before graduation. It is an opportunity for the class to join with the Legacy Class over a [formal dinner](#) and celebrate 100 days to graduation and commissioning as second lieutenants in the U.S. Air Force and Space Force. Cadets are given liberty for the weekend to celebrate, while 4th-degree cadets "decorate" their rooms in a festive manner.

Fountain Jumps

Our seniors make a big splash when they jump into the Air Garden fountains to celebrate the completion of their final exams. Cadets typically wear their flight suits or operational camouflage pattern uniforms and their class baseball caps. They can also incorporate inflatables into their jump for added fun. The tradition is allowed only to seniors who have completed their last test as a cadet and is believed to date back to the first class of graduates who took the plunge in the spring of 1959.

Graduation

Graduation Week is comprised of many activities and events across the Academy. Cadets and their guests participate in receptions, award ceremonies, baccalaureate services, concerts, parades, air demonstrations, and commissioning ceremonies. The week culminates at Falcon Stadium with the Graduation Ceremony. Speakers rotate between the president of the United States, vice president, Secretary of Defense and Secretary of the Air Force. At the close of the ceremony, cadets are dismissed and ceremoniously toss their caps into the air. Cheers and celebration are quickly silenced by the roar of the legendary Thunderbirds flying overhead to honor the graduating class.

Resource: <https://www.usafa.edu/parents/senior-year/>

USAFA Preparatory School parents and families

The U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School was established in 1961 under the command of Col. Lee Charles Black. Today, the Prep School offers a select group of enlisted personnel and civilians a potential pathway to join the cadets at the Academy. The school provides academic, leadership, and physical skills to prepare them for success as future officers. The Prep School operates separately and independently from the Academy and is a 10-month program focused on preparing cadet candidates for an Academy Appointment (cadet). Prior enlisted

candidates and those who did not receive an Academy appointment can be recommended for candidacy for attending the Prep School. There is not a direct application procedure to enter the Prep School. Offering Prep School parents/families membership in your club is a great way to add value to your club and increase member engagement. These families will potentially become your “experienced” appointee families once their cadet candidates receive appointments to USAFA at the completion of their Prep School journey.

U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School

5220 Cedar Drive, Suite 117

USAF Academy, CO 80840

(719)333-PREP (719)333-7737

USAFAPrepInfo@afacademy.af.edu

Resource:

<https://www.usafa.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/428289/us-air-force-academy-preparatory-school/>

Prep School Parents FACEBOOK Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/445661335799830/>

Noteworthy and helpful information

Copyright images and content

USAFA Trademark Licensing Program, and protected marks

All USAFA and USAFA Athletic Association crests, logos and insignias are protected marks. Academy approval must be received before the use of such seals and protected marks on any products. If approved, such products bearing USAFA seals and protected marks must be produced by a licensed vendor. Direct all questions to the USAFA branding team (USAFA.Branding@afacademy.af.edu) to ensure you are utilizing any trademarked or licensed logos appropriately.

Do not use, reproduce, or distribute copyrighted materials without proper authorization or attribution. Maintaining brand consistency is crucial as you serve as a representative of USAFA Parents' Clubs. Adhering to the provided guidelines for the usage of the USAFA logos, colors, and fonts ensures copyright and trademark policies are followed.

Resources: [Approval Information for USAF Academy Logo, the USAF Logo, & Class Crest Logos](#)

Guidelines & Permission. See the [Branding Guidelines](#)

To use the U.S. Air Force Academy logo, email: USAFA.Branding@afacademy.af.edu

To use the U.S. Air Force logo, email: licensing@us.af.mil

To use the Class Crest, email: membership@usafa.org

Visitors and guests - Getting on to the USAF Academy and visiting hours

Entering USAFA or any military base for the first time may be daunting for visitors but with a little preparation, accessing the base is as easy as 1-2-3. Visitors to the Air Force Academy *without Defense Department* credentials can now enter the base every day between 5:30 a.m.-10 p.m. through the north and south gates.

Resources

[Accessing the USAF Academy](#)

[USAFA Visiting Hours](#)

[Welcome to the U.S. Air Force Academy](#)

[Places to Eat at USAFA](#)

[Barry Goldwater Visitor Center](#)

Cadet Sponsor Program

Parents take note of this program!

Cadets come from across our nation and the world, and often their families live far from campus. The sponsor family program builds professional mentoring relationships and is made up of local Academy supporters who are willing to provide a home-away-from-home to Academy cadets. It is not a mandatory program, and cadets can opt out if they desire.

Resource: <https://www.usafa.edu/cadet-life/cadet-support-services/cadet-sponsor-program/>

Dennis P. Rando Cadet Humanitarian Fund

In addition to providing free travel for a cadet honor guard in the event of a fellow cadet's passing, the Rando Fund also provides need-based financial support to cadets who may not have the resources to travel home during emergencies such as a death in their family, a serious family illness or injury to a family member. Cadets with a financial need are granted all or part of the travel expenses. Those funds are a gift" made possible by the Fund's donors. Those donors are cadet families, cadet friends, AFA graduates, and the many cadet parent organizations from across the country. Determinations as to the necessity for a cadet to travel home as well as the assessment of a cadet's financial need is made by the cadet chaplain's office in conjunction with the cadet's Squadron Commander and the commandant's office.

Resources

https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/PC_Rando_Fund.pdf

<https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/Rando-Fund-PW-2023.pdf>

Academy Families Travel Network

The Academy Families Travel Network is a voluntary program and network of families and graduates from each of our five service academies that can assist cadets and midshipmen and their families as they travel across the country and the world when they are traveling to new assignments, on leisure, or during an emergency. To participate as a host or a guest, simply email them and make an inquiry.

Resources:

Email: AcademyFamiliesTravelNetwork@gmail.com

Presentation: <https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/Academy-Families-Travel-Network-Briefing-Final.pdf>

Parents' Weekend (Labor Day Weekend)

This annual event takes place over the Labor Day weekend. It is an exciting opportunity for cadets to connect with their families for the first time following [Basic Cadet Training \(BCT\)](#). Many activities are designed to orient families and guests to their cadet's life in the military. This event features a senior leader panel with parents' question-

and-answer session, aerial demonstrations and Cadet Wing parade, an information fair, airfield open house, and, of course, the home-opening Falcon Football game.

Make your hotel reservations as soon as possible as they get booked up quickly.

Resources:

<https://www.usafa.edu/about/traditions/Parents-weekend/>

<https://www.usafa.edu/about/traditions/parents-weekend/stadium-parade-policy/>

[Falcon Stadium Entrance Policies](#)

Taste of Home

Parents host a morale event where we explore the six different regions in our country that our cadets call home. Let us celebrate and put on the best parents-led party that USAFA has ever seen. We want to recognize the uniqueness of each of the different six regions across our country that our cadets call home and share the culture, customs, cuisine, traditions, and history of your region, while giving each club a voice in a parents-led celebration, no matter the size of the club.

Resources:

<https://usafatoh.afaParents.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/346554640597622/>



Gratitudes

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A huge shoutout goes out to all of the *past, present, and future parents' club presidents, ambassadors, and the Parent Liaison Team* for [living and pushing the edges of the envelop](#) into the wild blue yonder and beyond the bounds of the sky into space. Without you all, none of what we do, how we do it, and why we do it would be possible or successful.

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Disclaimer and Provisions

This handbook is provided as an introduction for USAFA Parents' Clubs or Associations. It was created for club presidents and subsequent leadership positions and club members. It is not intended to cover all topics but rather to bring a more immediate understanding of what is required to establish, run, and lead a club. This document contains linked presentations developed and presented for live audiences with subject matter experts. These linked presentations may be updated/removed and new presentations added as necessary.

The Quick Reference Guide and Resource Tool Kit is a dynamic and living document and will be updated periodically. The recommendations included in this handbook are not intended to be restrictive, mandatory, or required and are entirely optional. They are best practices & recommendations that may aid your parents' club and its members. We recommend that you review the manual thoroughly and contact the USAFA Parents' Liaison Team with any questions or concerns. To make additional contributions, corrections, or updates to this handbook, please contact the USAFA Parents' Liaison Team.

Acronyms & Terminology

10 FSS - 10th Force Support Squadron. Outdoor Recreation (think skiing, bicycle rentals, and fun trips), bowling Alley, golf course, horseback riding, Arts and Crafts Center, etc.

100's Night - 100's Night celebrates the C1Cs' last 100 days at the Academy. On 100's night, the Firsties receive their first assignments after graduation. On the weekend, the Firstie leave campus, and the C4Cs decorate the Firstie' rooms. It is quite a festive occasion.

A Hall - Arnie's - Arnold Hall. – Arnold Hall is the social center for the Cadet Wing and open to the public except under base restrictions. Named after the first general of the U.S. Air Force, Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, chief of the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II. Arnold Hall is located just west of the cadet area and houses Arnold Hall Theater, Arnold Hall Ballroom, Richter Lounge Food Court, Polaris Perks coffee shop, meeting rooms, and recreational facilities open to cadets and visitors. <https://www.usafa.edu/facilities/arnold-hall/>

AAFES - Army Air Force Exchange Store, pronounced "a fees."

AAOCA - Associate AOC for academics, a faculty member who is academic advisor for those cadets without a major.

ACC - Air Combat Command. The command in the Air Force responsible for combat delivery, refueling, rescue, and reconnaissance. It is a combination of the old SAC and TAC.

Acceptance - The time when freshmen are accepted into the Cadet Wing as full-fledged 4-degree cadets. Occurs at the Acceptance Parade after summer BCT is completed.

Ac Only - Academics only. A medical restriction excusing a cadet from physical and military activities.

AcPro - Academic probation. A grade average lower than 2.0 or flunking a subject. Ac Pro entails loss of privileges.

AptPro - Aptitude probation; for cadets displaying a less-than-desired attitude and/or performance.

Ac Pro Ranger - Someone consistently on academic probation.

ACQ - Academic call to quarters. Study time from 7:30 to 11:00 p.m. is set aside each night before an academic day. Military duties involving more than one cadet are not authorized.

AFSC - Air Force Space Command, responsible for all space operations.

AFSC - Air Force Specialty Code (Air Force job code).

AFT - Aerobic fitness test, a 1.5-mile run that is part of the athletic grade and given every semester.

AHSD - Arnold Hall security detail.

Airmanship 490 - Jump School where cadets make five parachute jumps and earn jump wings.

Air Gardens - The walking area on the Terrazzo between the flagpole and Mitchell Hall. Each tree stands for a graduate who died in combat in Vietnam. Forbidden for 4-degree cadets.

ALO - Admissions liaison officer - Active duty, retired Air Force, Air Force Reserve, or civilian volunteer who helps recruit for the Academy and helps students with the Academy application process. Counsels Academy and ROTC applicants regarding admissions programs. https://www.academyadmissions.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/ALO-Hiring-Info-Sheet_Oct2023.pdf or <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1nMcsuCyZLveleMZ1xksiPFXyRCEzySRJ>

AMI - Pronounced "Ammy," it means morning inspection. Rooms must be maintained in inspection order each morning during the week until noon and on training Saturdays until completion of training.

AOC - Air officer commanding, an officer in charge of a cadet squadron. This term is no longer used. See Squadron Commander.

AOG - Association of Graduates. It is the Academy's alumni association and is a private, tax-exempt corporation in Colorado. Its primary goals are to provide services to the USAFA graduates, support the mission of the Academy, and promote fellowship, pride, and spirit among graduates, their families, and the Academy community.

APECS - All-purpose environmental clothing system.

Article 15 - The most frequent type of military discipline available under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), formally referred to as nonjudicial punishment. No formal criminal proceeding is required, and it does not create a criminal record.

ARC - Academic Review Committee.

Athletic Director's List - List of athletic performance. Earned through achieving a physical education average (PEA) of 3.0 or higher. The PEA is based on the PFT, PE class grades from previous semester, and the AFT score. Signified by a "lightning bolt" worn on the left breast pocket.

BCGs - Basic Cadet's glasses or birth control glasses. Ugly, plastic, square-rimmed "issue" glasses that will not break.

BCT - Basic Cadet Training. Also referred as the "Beast."

BDU - Battle dress uniform.

Bearing - Military behavior or manner.

Beat the Dean - Perform well on a final exam.

Bird – "**The Bird**" - The USAFA mascot – The **Falcon**. The Fighting Falcons. A gift (statue) given to visitors or guest speakers. No, not what popularly first comes to mind.

Beast - Basic Cadet Training (otherwise known as BCT).

Blue Weekend - Weekends when cadets should have free time with no official training.

BOR - Base of the ramp. The famous meeting place where your cadet begins his or her Academy life. After leaving in-processing at the AOG building on the bus, your cadet will be delivered to the footprint pad at the base of the ramp, where they come to attention before going up the ramp and into their USAFA experience.

C1C - Cadet First Class (a senior). Also known as Firstie.

C2C - Cadet Second Class (a junior). Also known as 2-degree.

C3C - Cadet Third Class (a sophomore). Also known as 3-degree.

C4C - Cadet Fourth Class (a freshman). Also known as 4-degree and formerly known as Doolie.

Cadet Wing or **Wing** - Military organization of all cadets, consisting of four groups, totaling approximately 4,000 cadets.

Cadre - Upper-class cadets holding leadership positions.

CAMIS - Cadet Administrative Management Information System. Computer system used by cadets to get schedules, grades, and other administrative information.

CCLD - Center for Character and Leadership Development.

CCQ - The cadet in charge of quarters. The squadron representative who answers the phones, takes messages, etc.

CDS - Cadet discipline system **CIC** - Cadet in charge.

Challenge coin(s) – see: <https://www.defense.gov/News/Inside-DOD/Blog/Article/2567302/the-challenge-coin-tradition-do-you-know-how-it-started/>. A century-old American military tradition, meant to instill unit pride, improve esprit de corps, and reward hard work and excellence.

CINC – Commander-in-chief. Pronounced "sink."

Command post - Cadet Wing Operations Center, the organization in charge of day-to-day operations for the Cadet Wing.

COMM - Commandant of cadets in charge of the military training at USAFA.

Comm's List - Commandant's List for cadet military performance, earned through achieving a military performance average (MPA) of 3.00 or above for the previous semester and signified by a "wreath" worn on the left breast pocket.

CONUS - Continental United States.

Cover - Military headgear (hat, helmet, etc.).

C Store - Cadet Store (where cadets can buy books, snacks, and needed supplies).

CS - Cadet Squadron, usually followed by a number.

CST - Combat Survival Training.

CUI – Controlled Unclassified Information – U.S. government-created or owned information that requires safeguarding and dissemination controls, consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and government-wide policies.

Dark Ages - That period after daylight savings time until Spring Break. This period is said to drag on for millennia. The daylight hours are short.

Dead Week - The week between spring finals and graduation.

Dean's List - Dean's List for academic achievement, earned by achieving a GPA of 3.0 or higher during the previous semester and signified by a "star" worn on the left breast pocket.

Demerit – Normally, the points that may add up to a punishment for military infractions.

DF - The dean of faculty.

Dining-In - A formal dinner for officers, NCOs, and cadets.

Dining-out - Same as dining-in, but one can bring a guest.

DI - Dormitory inspection, night check for accountability.

Doolie – 4-degree cadet, equivalent to a freshman, after being accepted into the Cadet Wing. This term is no longer used.

Dodo - Underground humor magazine, for cadets only.

ECP - Entry control point (Installation gate, normally).

EI - Extra instruction or tutoring.

Element - The basic unit of a squadron, consisting of about 12 cadets.

ESET - Expeditionary evasion survival training consisting of survival and evasion, taught during second summer at USAFA.

Fairchild Hall - The cadet academic building.

Falcon Alerts - Program where cadets sign up to receive texts regarding weather, base exercises, or emergency notifications. Cadets can sign up parent phone numbers as well.

FIGMO - Forget it, got my orders. Demonstrating a "don't-care" attitude. Mathematically expressed by dividing the number of days spent at the Academy by the number of days until graduation.

Firstie - First-class cadet, equivalent to a senior. In cadet terms "that immortal being having superhuman powers and disposed to acts of great wonder and cunning."

FPCON ALPHA - This condition applies when there is a general threat of possible terrorist activity against personnel and facilities, the nature and extent of which are unpredictable, and circumstances do not justify full implementation of FPCON BRAVO measures. However, it may be necessary to implement certain measures from

higher THREATCONS resulting from intelligence received or as a deterrent. The measures in this THREATCON must be capable of being maintained indefinitely.

FPCON BRAVO - This condition applies when an increased and more predictable threat of terrorist activity exists. The measures in this THREATCON must be capable of being maintained for weeks without causing undue hardship, affecting operational capability, and aggravating relations with local authorities.

FPCON CHARLIE - This condition applies when an incident occurs, or intelligence is received indicating some form of terrorist action against personnel and facilities is imminent. Implementation of measures in this THREATCON for more than a short period probably will create hardship and affect the peacetime activities of the unit and its personnel.

FPCON DELTA - This condition applies in the immediate area where a terrorist attack has occurred or when intelligence has been received that terrorist action against a specific location or person is likely. Normally, this THREATCON is declared as a localized condition.

Form 10 – A form to report a cadet actions (Positive or negative).

Form 19 – A form indicating injuries and restrictions based on the injury.

F-19 Pilot – A cadet who seems to be on a Form 19 all the time.

FOUO - For Official Use Only.

Flight - A flight consists of three elements, about 36 cadets.

GR - Graded review (an important exam).

Group - Consists of 10 squadrons, totaling 1,000 to 1,100 cadets. There are four groups in the Cadet Wing at the Academy.

Good for DI - Cadet accountability system. The absence reporting system.

Harmon Hall - Houses most of the administrative offices at the Academy, including the superintendent's office, located next to Arnold Hall.

HAP'S – Hap's Place is a hangout spot located in Arnold Hall; it is a Cadet Lounge for Firsties and 2-degree cadets. Serves food and alcohol, featuring TVs, game tables, events such as trivia night and more.

<https://www.af.mil/About-Us/Biographies/Display/Article/107811/henry-h-arnold/>

IFT - Initial flight training.

IG - Inspector General.

IC - Intercollegiate.

IP - Instructor pilot.

Jack's Valley - Site of encampment training during Basic Cadet Training (BCT) at USAFA.

Jack's Hack - A cough developed in second BCT at Jack's Valley from constant exposure to dust. It usually disappears with rain or at the end of BCT.

Jodies - Songs sung while running or marching in formation.

Knowledge Bowl - Event where 4-degrees compete against another squadron to display their grasp of military knowledge.

LMD - Last military duty.

M-Days/T-Days - Alternating days of the academic week during the academic year. For example, Monday is a M-day, Tuesday is a T-Day, Wednesday is an M-Day, etc. Each M-Day includes an M-5 period.

M-1 - First day of class or first period of M-Day.

M-5 - The fifth period of each M-Day during which various military trainings are conducted.

Mitch's - Mitchell Hall - The cadet dining hall.

MPA - Military performance average. Military evaluation accomplished each semester based on a 0 to 4.0 scale.

MRC - Military Review Committee. A panel convened to examine the facts and circumstances concerning an alleged serious offense or continuing misconduct. The MRC will recommend suitable demerits, punishments, and appropriate corrective action to the commandant for approval.

MTL - Military training leader.

MWR - Morale, welfare and recreation.

NCO - Non-commissioned officer.

NCOIC - Non-commissioned officer in charge.

OIC - Officer in charge.

OCP - Operational camouflage pattern is a **military** camouflage pattern.

OPA - Overall performance average. The weighted combination of academic performance average (APA), military performance average (MPA), and athletic performance. The graduation class standing is based on cadet cumulative OPA.

OPSEC – Operational security, see: https://www.militarymadesimple.com/opsec_persec.html

OTF - Over the fence. Off base without privileges; AWOL.

PCS - Permanent change of station; being transferred.

PEA - Physical education Average; cadets with a PEA of 3.0 or higher are awarded a silver lightning bolt by the Director of Athletics.

PFT - Physical fitness test. Consists of pull-ups, push-ups, sit-ups, standing long jump and a 600-yard run. Part of the athletic grade that is given every semester.

Parade Dress - The uniform worn for outdoor parades and that Firsties wear to graduation. It consists of white pants, a short, double-breasted blue jacket, and a white cap. A gold sash is worn by Firsties only.

PERSEC – Personal security see: https://www.militarymadesimple.com/opsec_persec.html

PKR - Professional knowledge reviews.

Prog - the point midway through each semester where academic grades are provided.

Prop and Wings - the emblem of an upperclassman.

PT - Physical training.

PQ -Pilot-qualified. A cadet who is qualified to attend pilot training.

Rated - An officer who has been assigned a job (career field) who is qualified to fly, navigate, operate, or control onboard military aircraft systems.

Restriction - A disciplinary status imposed on cadets, which limits their movements within the cadet area. Restricted cadets are permitted to attend on-base religious services, a daily two-hour period of workout/athletic activities, and a daily two-hour period at the cadet library. The length of restriction can vary from one weekend up to six months.

Reveille - the bugle call that wakes cadets.

SAMI - Saturday a.m. Inspection.

SCRB - Squadron Commander’s Review Board. A fact-finding and evaluation before a Military Review Committee. Pronounced “scrub.”

Service Dress - Consists of a light blue shirt and tie, a blue jacket, and pants, worn with either the flight cap or the wheel cap.

SF - Security Forces, the Air Force law enforcement agency.

SF - USSF - Space Force, The United States Space Force

SFSC - Space Force Specialty Code (SF Job Code).

Sijan Hall - The newest dorm to the south of the terrazzo.

Silver Weekend - Generally, two weekends per month are devoted to military training (Silver Weekends). Training is from Friday afternoon through early Saturday afternoon. Activities during this time include room and uniform inspections, parades, marching practice, military briefings, guest speakers, and professional military education and training.

SDO - Squadron duty officer.

SOD - Senior Officer of the Day, Firstie in charge of the Cadet Wing for the day.

Smack - Soldier Minus Ability, Coordination, and Knowledge. A frequent reference to four-degree cadets.

Spirit Cheese - Cheese slices thrown in Falcon Stadium to celebrate during a football game, officially **not** authorized or permitted.

Spirit Hill - The big hill area in the middle of the terrazzo.

Spirit Mission - 4th Class activities used to demonstrate support for athletics and individual squadrons.

Supt's List - Superintendent's List, - The award for academic, military, and athletic performance. Must be on the Dean's List, the Commandant's List, and the Athletic List. Signified by a "Star inside a Wreath with two Lightning Bolts below" worn on the left breast pocket. Often referred to as the "God's Pin."

Squadron Consists of 4 flights, about 110 cadets. There are 40 squadrons at the Academy.

Commander Squadron Commander- Formerly known as Air Officer Commanding. The officer, usually a captain or a major, is directly in charge of your son's/daughter's squadron. The squadron commander is the one to talk to when you or your cadets have problems. Avoid calling the Squadron Commander except in emergencies.

Squadron Shuffle Squadron change for cadets. The timeframe has changed in the past, but currently the policy is switching squadrons right before cadet's junior year.

Square Corners One of the duties of every 4-degree class cadet. They must always "square" corners when walking.

Taps - the mournful tune that signifies the end of the day for cadets.

SSS Staff Summary Sheet (Triple S). A standard routing sheet for packages. Mainly used to request permission for passes for special occasions.

TDY - Temporary duty (any trip or official business that takes one away from his duty station).

Terrazzo "TZO" ~Tee-Zo - the large flat area between the dormitories and other buildings in the cadet area.

Touch and Go – Take-out dinner from Mitchell Hall.

Tour "Marching Tours" – 60 minutes of marching with a rifle (is "awarded" for a variety of infractions, used for disciplinary purposes).

TWOC - Training Wing Operations Center. Located in Vandenberg Hall on the Terrazzo level near the top of the "Bring Me Men" ramp.

UCMJ - Uniform Code of Military Justice. The code of laws under which all military personnel live.

UOD - Uniform of the Day.

Up the Hill – Endearing term meaning the student will be or is attending the U.S. Air Force Academy – usually coming from the USAFA Preparatory School.

Upper class - Cadets in the 3, 2 or 1 -degree classes.

USAF - United States Air Force.

USAFA - Pronounced "You-Soffa." The United States Air Force Academy.

USAFAP - The "P" - The United States Air Force Academy Preparatory School

USSF - United States Space Force.

Vandy - Vandenberg Hall - one of two cadet dormitories.

Zoomie - graduate or cadet at USAFA.

Zoo - nickname for USAFA (i.e., the blue "zoo")

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Quick Links

[USAFA Parents FAQs](#)

[Parents' Weekend FAQ's](#)

[AOG Membership FAQs](#)

[Basic Cadet Training FAQ's](#)

[USAFA FAQs](#)

[Preparatory School FAQ's](#)

[Recognition FAQ's](#)

What is an ALO? Admissions Liaison Officer

Your admissions liaison officer is qualified to assist you in all aspects of Academy admissions, to answer any questions you might have about USAFA or the admissions requirements, or to discuss what it means to be an officer in the Air Force or Space Force. Reach out to the Parents' Liaison Team to be connected to the ALO in your area.

What does a typical day like at USAFA?

The Schedule of Calls outlines a typical day in the life of a USAFA cadet: [Schedule of Calls AY 23-24 \(usafa.edu\)](#).

What is the Falcon Foundation?

A group of prominent retired Air Force officers organized the Falcon Foundation in 1958, three years after the USAFA (USAFA) admitted its first class. The Falcon Foundation is a 501(c)(3), nonprofit foundation. Its purpose is to provide scholarships to college or preparatory Schools for motivated young people seeking admission to USAFA and a career in the Air Force. Although it is a separate organization, the Falcon Foundation works closely with USAFA. Information concerning the Falcon Foundation and its scholarship program can be found on the [website](#).

A parent reached out to me/signed up via the parents' club website, but their name/contact info is not in the CUI roster provided by the Parent Liaison Team. What do I do?

There are two options:

- Request they complete an information release form [Parent Guardian Release Form.pdf \(usafa.edu\)](#)
- Contact the USAFA Parent Liaison Team for confirmation.

A parent called me with a concern about their cadet; what do I do/who do I contact (business hours and after hours, during Basic Cadet Training and after)?

It is always best to have the parent/guardian reach out directly to contact the Parent Liaison Team. For an after-hours emergency, contact the USAFA Command Post and explain the situation: 719-333-2633.

A family relocated to my area; what is the best way to transfer club membership (or is there a way)?

Parents/guardians can join multiple clubs if they wish to do so. It is up to each individual family to work out dues arrangements if necessary.

How do I find out about US representative or senator nomination events, and can I go?

Reach out to your local ALO for information on Academy days or nomination events. Your Parent Liaison Team can also help you find this information.

Should/can I attend local school's "academy" or college nights? How do I get approval or swag to share? Are there any tools/best practices for reaching out to schools to share about the AFA?

Connect with your local Academy liaison officer (ALO) to determine how you can best support these events. Your ALO can also help provide you with brochures, information, etc. to share.

I have a parent who wants to donate money, but we are not a 5013C; what should I do?

Accepting contributions and in-kind gifts

The club should gratefully acknowledge the donors' generosity and thank them for their contributions. The following are the details for making and accepting contributions. Contributions to your parents' club can be accepted and considered a contribution to your club. Unless your club is an independent nonprofit, contributions are **not tax-deductible**. To obtain nonprofit status, refer to the 501(C)3 Section of this Handbook. Your club may only solicit and collect donations on behalf of your club **and not for USAFA, the AOG, or the Academy Foundation**. Your parents' club may accept in-kind gifts of goods and provide a receipt, however, USAFA cannot provide tax receipts. Individuals should consult their legal and tax advisors for professional advice regarding the tax and legal implications of in-kind gifts. In-kind donations of services are not tax-deductible. For more information, visit <https://www.irs.gov/publications/p526>. Note: USAFA cannot provide a tax-deductible receipt for any kind of donated service. Examples of services include the following:

- A graphic designer donates her design services to make a T-shirt design.
- A parent club member volunteers his time to staff an event.
- A chef donates his time to prepare hors d'oeuvres for a reception.

Appendix

List of Parents' Clubs (State/Club

<https://www.usafa.edu/parents/parent-clubs-spirit-committees/>

Parent Facebook Pages by Class (There is a pattern in those links)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/usafa2025parents>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/usafa2026parents>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/usafa2027parents>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/usafa2028parents>

Facebook Pages for parents of all classes and graduates

USAFA Parent Resource <https://www.facebook.com/groups/229767567187985>

Life is Cadet Parent <https://www.facebook.com/groups/178815148894960>

Official USAFA Parent website <https://www.usafa.edu/parents/>

Official USAFA Parent Presidents Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ParentClubPresidentCommunity>

Official AOG/Foundation Websites

AOG & Foundation (Giving) <https://www.usafa.org/>

AOG Parents Portal <https://www.usafa.org/Parents>

AOG store <https://shop.usafa.org/>

WebGuy <https://www.usafawebguy.com/>

USAFA Fact Sheet <https://www.usafa.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/>

USAFA Public & Cadet Facilities <https://www.usafa.edu/facilities/>

ALL PARENTS/GUARDIANS - Please review this important message.

<https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/A-Guide-to-difficult-conversations.pdf>