

MYTHBUSTER

Dealing with parental misconceptions

Valerie McBurney, Head of Volunteer Recruitment and Communications at the CCFA, offers some advice on telling parents about the CCF

Everyone has different ideas about the benefits of having a CCF unit in school. Parents and guardians, especially those with children who are new to the school, may have preconceptions that aren't completely accurate. So here are a few common myths – and some suggested ways to address them:

1 “Joining the CCF is the same as joining the military”

Cadet units in schools are supported financially by the Ministry of Defence, but are not part of the Armed Forces. The cadet forces follow some of the customs of their parent service, such as rank structure, but the organisations are separate.

2 “Cadets are obliged to do time in the Armed Forces when they're older”

Not at all. The CCF is simply a voluntary youth organisation.

3 “It's risky”

Where safeguarding is concerned, CCF adults have to pass a Disclosure and Barring Service, Access Northern Ireland or Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scotland check before they start working with cadets. In terms of the activities, some do have an element of risk, but contingent commanders must ensure that they take place within policy parameters set by the Ministry of

Defence, and that the risks are kept as low as possible. Overall responsibility for managing risk lies with the headteacher.

4 “It's expensive”

Some items of uniform do need to be purchased privately by the school or by cadets. In instances of hardship, CCF units can apply for a small grant to help individual cadets (find out more at www.combinedcadetforce.org.uk/ccfa). When cadets attend field days or camps, there is a small charge for certain activities and daily messing (meals). If cadets receive free school meals they do not need to pay for meals (CCF instructors should flag this up in advance).

5 “It will just teach them to follow orders blindly”

Some activities such as drill involve paying close attention to orders. But this is because when cadets are in the field and someone calls 'stop', they do so instantly. Many activities develop leadership skills. Strong leaders are able to challenge accepted ways of doing things, come up with solutions, think creatively when things go wrong and persuade others to follow their lead.



Many CCF activities develop strong leadership skills in cadets

RESOURCES

HELP TO CONVINCE PARENTS ABOUT THE CCF'S VALUE

- » Point parents to: www.combinedcadetforce.org.uk/get-involved/for-parents, where you'll find some FAQs.
- » Repurpose these mythbusters as FAQs in the CCF area of your school website or in CCF communications to parents.
- » Help parents to see how much cadets get out of the CCF by including a link to the CCF cadet video on your website: www.combinedcadetforce.org.uk/get-involved/become-a-cadet. If you prefer you can add the cadet video to your school website. (Contact marketing@combinedcadetforce.org.uk.)
- » Think about approaching CCFA for small grants: www.combinedcadetforce.org.uk/ccfa

» ADDRESSING CONCERNS

If you think parents might have concerns or questions about the CCF, try to tease these out during open evenings. If you need more advice on engaging with parents, contact marketing@combinedcadetforce.org.uk