



# STAFF HANDBOOK

**Class 53**

**MONTANA YOUTH CHALLENGE ACADEMY**

*This edition revised March 25, 2025*

*The Montana National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Academy assists at-risk Montana youth in developing skills and abilities necessary to become productive citizens through focusing upon the physical, emotional and educational needs of the youth within a highly structured environment.*

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## Academy Overview

**Academy Philosophy:** Montana Youth ChalleNGe Academy exists to intervene in and reclaim the lives of sixteen to eighteen year-old adolescents who are at risk of high school dropout, producing program graduates with the values, life skills, education, and self-discipline necessary to succeed as productive citizens.

**Vision:** The Montana Youth ChalleNGe Academy will be recognized as the premier voluntary program for sixteen to eighteen year-old high school dropouts.

**Objective:** The objective of the Academy is to improve life skills and employment potential of participants through a quasi-military environment.

It is imperative that each of us, as ChalleNGe employees, foster an environment that is positive and we model the character and values we teach to the youth. We must maintain moral and ethical standards that promote the behaviors we want portrayed in each of our graduates. All staff will adhere to the [National Guard Bureau \(NGB\) Hands-off Leadership](#) policy and will not subject any student to abuse of any kind, including physical, emotional, or verbal.

**Director's Intent:** All staff activities must conform to the Director's intent for the fulfillment of our mission. Please familiarize yourself with these concepts and regularly assess whether your actions and decisions align.

*In order to effectively intervene in the lives of at-risk youth, we will work consistently in all areas of operation to develop, maintain, and leverage **high quality, trusting relationships** with the youth, their guardians, and those who fund and support MYCA.*

*We will treat all youth and their guardians with the same **dignity and respect** we would expect for our own family.*

*All of our operations will be informed by awareness of the **impact of past trauma**, but our interventions with youth will **emphasize their strengths**. We will recognize that **diverse factors** of identity and experience affect the behaviors, academic performance, and social skills competence of program participants.*

*We will engage every program participant at his/her level, and we will help participants develop life plans that are both **aspirational and realistic**.*

*All training will support one of the 8 Core Components while maintaining the **care, welfare, and safety** of cadets and staff.*

*We will be successful when we consistently graduate at or above our target number of cadets who are better prepared to **lead healthy lives and to become productive citizens** and we retain a **highly engaged, and professional** staff who are capable of maximizing the learning opportunities MYCA provides.*

**Eight Core Components:** The Academy was designed as an eight-part intervention model that improves specific skills and facilitates the overall growth of participants. Throughout the Residential Phase, participants are instructed in each component and then are required to

demonstrate growth in each component's required tasks. The components create an environment that fosters teamwork, belonging, individual and group motivation, individual and group discipline, academic achievement, personal responsibility and accountability, and a culture of health and fitness.

All cadets attending the ChalleNGe Academy must achieve 80% proficiency and show improvement in all eight areas to successfully graduate from the Residential Phase. The operational departments divide responsibility for these components and their associated tasks, conducting the training and assessments required to demonstrate proficiency. All staff are expected to understand and support the components, regardless of direct involvement in their facilitation.

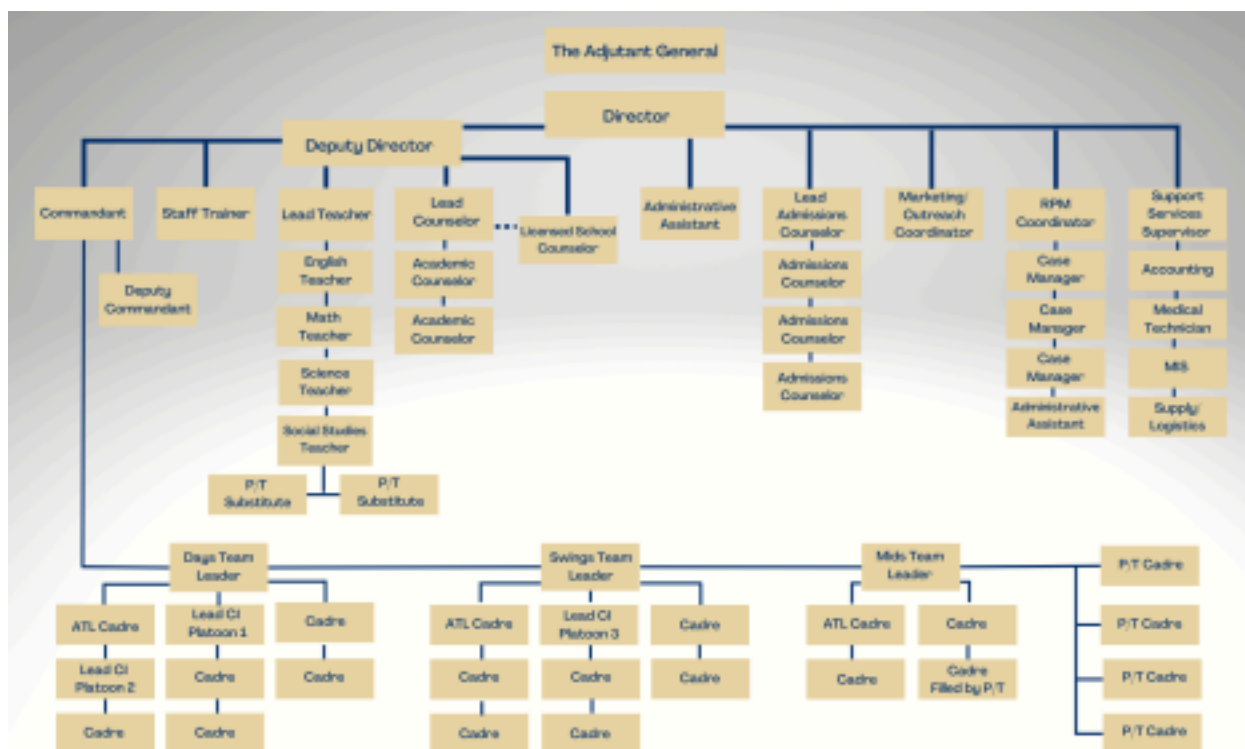
- 1. Academic Excellence.** All ChalleNGe participants attend academic classes that increase math and reading comprehension. Academic classes prepare cadets for the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET), or to return to high school with credit for their coursework at the Academy. Academic Excellence is measured using the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE)- improvement is expected on the exit assessment. Cadets also explore the knowledge and skills required to pursue future educational opportunities. Montana Youth ChalleNGe is uniquely situated on the campus of the University of Montana, Western, allowing qualified cadets to experience college courses during the second quarter of the Residential Phase.
- 2. Health and Hygiene.** Cadets learn the value of a healthy lifestyle, and how to take care of themselves. Cadets are instructed in healthy personal hygiene practices by Cadre. Operational staff offer prevention education on substance abuse, sexual health, and nutrition. Cadets are given opportunities, through coursework and structured class discussions, to consider how their choices in the areas of health and hygiene may impact their futures.
- 3. Job Skills.** Cadets prepare for long-term, gainful employment. Career exploration is accomplished through career assessment and interest inventories, job-specific skills orientation and awareness, and training in specific vocations as available. Specific classroom activities focus on development of individual resumes, completing job applications, and preparation for job interviews.
- 4. Leadership/Followership.** Cadets develop strong character while identifying and applying individual moral and ethical standards to perform various roles and responsibilities in a structured group environment. They learn to willingly comply with established rules, regulations, and procedures, and to perform basic military customs and courtesies. Cadets also learn how to define and recognize leadership skills, traits, dimensions, and components. Finally, they employ leadership skills while performing in leadership positions, maintaining their personal living area, and functioning as effective team members.
- 5. Life-Coping Skills.** Cadets learn skills designed to last a lifetime. Increased self-esteem and self-discipline are gained through a combination of classroom activities, group discussions, and a structured living environment. Cadets learn how to identify and self-regulate difficult emotions such as anger, grief, and frustration, how to navigate stress, and how to engage effective conflict-resolution strategies. ChalleNGe provides the

educational resources necessary to foster fiscal responsibility, helping cadets understand personal finance, basic banking, obtaining and managing consumer credit, and how to prepare and manage a personal budget.

6. **Physical Fitness.** Physical fitness becomes an integral part of cadet daily life. Cadets perform physical training based on the President's Challenge. Cadets are assessed at intervals throughout the program for progress in their fitness, and are tested on their knowledge of physical fitness concepts.
7. **Responsible Citizenship.** Cadets discover their role in the democratic process and learn their rights, privileges, and obligations as citizens of the United States. The U.S. government structure and processes, along with individual rights and responsibilities at the local, state, and national level are addressed in the classroom environment, in student government processes, and through practical experiences in the local community. Those who are eligible register for selective service and to vote.
8. **Service to Community.** Cadets realize the value and importance of giving back to the community while performing a minimum of 40 hours of service to community and/or conservation project activities during the Residential Phase. These activities provide additional opportunities for career exploration as well as enhancing cadets' awareness of community needs and building a strong relationship between the Academy and the community.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Academy Staff



**Overview of the Departments and Positions:** The ChalleNGe Academy staff is divided into the following departments: Administration, Academic Counseling, Admissions, Cadre, Outreach & Marketing, Post Residential, Support Services, and Teaching. Each department makes a critical contribution to the mission of the Academy. The following descriptions of departments and positions clarify the contribution that each makes to mission-fulfillment. Detailed procedures, and a complete description of duties are located in position descriptions and department SOP's, not in this document.

**Administration:** The Administration includes the Director and Deputy Director, supported by an Administrative Assistant and the Staff Training Coordinator. This department oversees the Academy including its staff, program, and resources. This department ensures that the Academy fulfills its mission.

**Director** has overall responsibility for the Academy. The Director manages the staff and ensures that the goals and objectives of the Academy are being met. The staff sections of the ChalleNGe Academy carry out the standards and guidelines of the Director. The Director is responsible for coordinating the operations of the Admissions, Post-Residential, and Support Services Departments.

**Deputy Director** is responsible for administering and coordinating the operations and services of the Academy including the Academic Counseling, Cadre, Medical, Staff Training, and Teaching Departments; and for managing its policies, administrative systems, and resources. The Deputy Director ensures the Academy's compliance with all training requirements. Finally, the Deputy Director addresses conflicts between staff and oversees discipline processes for cadets.

**Administrative Assistant** reports to the Director and provides support with scheduling, communications with the public, data inputs associated with students and staff, and overseeing the Academy's required archives.

**Staff Training Coordinator** reports to the Deputy Director and plans and facilitates training for staff as required by state and federal entities as well as the professional development needs of staff determined by the Director and Deputy Director. The Staff Training Coordinator functions

as a Department Lead, with the authority to assign training activities to staff in any department, to advise the Director, and to provide feedback to supervisors about the performance of their staff, as observed in training and coaching circumstances.

**Academic Counseling Department:** The Academic Counseling Department addresses the concerns, behaviors, and needs of each cadet with the goal of promoting academic and personal development to further life success. This department is also responsible for all counseling data input.

**Lead Academic Counselor** plans, oversees, develops, and administers life and academic counseling and development for Academy participants to provide individual development opportunities and performs all duties of the counselor for a platoon of cadets for the duration of the residential phase. The Lead Academic Counselor also performs a variety of leadership and Academy outreach activities to increase opportunities for participants through interaction with the community, academic and vocational institutions, and other resources, and to externally promote the Academy and its goals. This position supervises 2 non-licensed Academic Counselors. The Lead Academic Counselor serves on the OMT and reports to the Deputy Director.

**Academic Counselors** perform the initial intake and assessment of cadets during the Acclimation phase of the Academy. Counselors also assist in retaining youth who struggle through this transition phase. They provide daily crisis counseling on an as needed basis throughout the cycle for those cadets who struggle to cope with meeting their day to day needs. Academic Counselors serve as the primary contact between cadets, families, and external agencies working with the youth and are responsible for the development and implementation of curriculum on a variety of topics to include life coping skills, job skills, and health and hygiene topics. Academic Counselors also serve as career/placement counselors in developing short term and long term goals for the students following the residential phase. They have final oversight of the development of the Post Residential Action Plan (PRAP) to ensure successful placement of youth upon graduation.

**Licensed School Counselor** reports to the Deputy Director and handles a rolling caseload of cadets referred by Academic Counselors for social/emotional support. Goals, progress, and conclusion of work with these cadets will be communicated with Academic Counselors, Quads, and the OMT as requested. The Licensed School Counselor also serves as the main point of contact with school districts in determining paths to graduation as well as receiving IEPs/504s. The Licensed School Counselor serves on the Operations Management Team.

**Admissions Department:** The Admissions Department is under the direct supervision of the Academy Director. This department is composed of a Lead Admissions Counselor and three full-time Admissions Counselors who are charged with the primary responsibility of locating, pre-qualifying and recruiting an adequate number of applicants to meet the Academy goals. Additional responsibilities include cultivating and continually developing positive, personal relationships with the individuals and organizations around Montana who support the youth that the Academy serves.

**Lead Admissions Counselor** is responsible for the management of the Admissions Department. This position supervises three full-time Admissions Counselors and ensures departmental compliance with the National Guard Bureau's Master Youth Cooperative Agreement, the Director's State Plan, and Academy Policies. The Lead Admissions Counselor identifies and provides ongoing training to the Admissions team to ensure they meet their recruiting missions with qualified candidates every class.

**Admissions Counselors** travel extensively through the state of Montana to cultivate relationships

with key individuals in the communities we serve. They identify and execute outreach and promotion opportunities, collaborate with youth-serving organizations, and engage directly with at-risk youth who are candidates for the Academy. The Admissions Counselors guide candidates through the application and admissions processes, and ensure that candidates are a good fit for the program.

**Cadre Department:** This department implements the Academy's quasi-military model. Cadre Instructors are responsible for the safety and accountability of cadets at all times. They provide 24-hour direct supervision, instruction, paraprofessional behavior management, and a structured environment to candidates/cadets. The department is structured according to a military model of the "chain of command."

**Commandant** has overall responsibility for implementing and conveying the standards of the quasi-military model. The Commandant coordinates cadet training and ensures continuity of standards and methods between cadre shifts. Serving as the Academy's Dean of Students, the Commandant also supervises both the disciplinary and incentive programs for cadets. He determines the level and status of cadets relative to each. He serves on the Operations Management Team (OMT) and facilitates discipline-related interventions in collaboration with the Deputy Director.

**Operations Sergeant Major** supports the mission of the Commandant by developing, planning, coordinating, and executing cadre manning and cadet training schedules, and by implementing specific core components. The Operations Sergeant Major coordinates Service to Community (STC) projects and Food Service. Finally, s/he fills cadre shift leadership positions as required throughout the residential phase.

**Team Leader/First Sergeant (Days, Swings, Mids)** provides direct supervision to cadre instructors on each shift, and oversees the implementation of the training schedule developed by the Operations Sergeant Major. The Team Leader ensures their shift is manned in accordance with current policy. The Team Leader ensures the training schedules are followed, and that all guidelines and standards established by the Director are adhered to. Team Leaders will ensure, upon assumption of duty, that every cadre member has a current daily schedule in his/her possession. Daily accountability is the responsibility of the Team Leader who verifies attendance and location of all cadets. The Team Leader is responsible for evaluation of the cadre staff.

**Cadre Instructors** are responsible for the safety, accountability, and program participation of cadets. They run the daily training schedule for their assigned cohort of cadets (platoons or classes), and report directly to the Team Leader. Cadre Instructors teach cadets all aspects of the quasi-military model, as well as the Leadership/Followership, Service to Community, and Physical Fitness core components.

**Outreach & Marketing Coordination:** This department implements a strategic marketing plan which consists of strategic networking and building statewide awareness of the Academy. Marketing & Outreach takes place on multiple (internal and external) levels to unite the mission of the Academy with those in need of its offerings.

**Outreach & Marketing Coordinator** reports to the Director and works collaboratively with all departments (with an emphasis on Admissions) to support the Academy's mission. Communication efforts (including but not limited to: television, radio, newspaper, print-promotion, social media, and special events) highlight the Challenge experience and the

benefits of the Challenge Model of youth development to the families of current cadets, the program's graduates, stakeholders, prospective candidates, potential mentors, and future partners.

**Post Residential Department:** This department is charged with providing mentoring services to cadets in their home communities while the cadets are attending the Residential Phase and for 12 months after Residential graduation from MYCA. It consists of a Coordinator and 3 Case Managers who direct and oversee all activities and operations directly related to the Post Residential Department. The Case Managers report to the Post Residential Coordinator. They recruit, select and train mentors for the cadets in the Academy. Post Residential coordinates, monitors, and reports mentor contacts and placement. The department also works in conjunction with the Academic Counseling Department to secure verified placement for cadets prior to Residential graduation. Post Residential also maintains follow up information on graduates, and provides statistics when called upon by the Academy Director.

**Post Residential Coordinator** reports to the Director and recruits mentors for all cadets, screening them through phone interviews and background checks. They conduct two mentor training workshops per cycle for mentors and cadets to learn about MYCA requirements. They are also responsible to match all cadets with a screened, trained Mentor by the conclusion of Week 13 and assist cadets and counselors with achieving verified placement for cadets. They coordinate phone calls and contact between cadets and mentors during the residential phase and teach classes for cadets on the basics and standards for a good mentee/mentor relationship. They monitor cadet/mentor relationship and cadet's placement for a one year period following residential phase, troubleshooting as issues arise and compiling and recording data monthly on cadet placement and mentor contacts. The Post Residential Coordinator serves on the Operations Management Team.

**Post Residential Case Managers** assess, plan, implement, coordinate, monitor, and evaluate the overall post-residential success of cadets, including their placement and mentor relationships. Case Managers maintain caseloads of cadets and mentors through regular contact with mentors. They provide mentors with the coaching and support necessary to succeed. They also support operations as voting members of the platoon quads.

**Support Services Department:** This department is responsible for all logistical, financial, and administrative support of the Academy. This department works hand in hand with operations to ensure students and staff needs are met in order to ensure overall Academy success. All requests and services needed by staff should be coordinated through Support Services. The Budget Analyst, Management Information Systems Technician (MIS), Medical Technician, and Supply Technician all report to the Support Services Coordinator. The Support Services Supervisor also processes payroll and serves as the in-house human resource point of contact.

**Support Services Supervisor** reports to the Director and oversees the Support Services Department and the activities of its members. In coordination with the Budget Analyst, the Support Services Supervisor is responsible for financial management including accounts payable & budget development and tracking. The Support Services Supervisor also processes payroll and serves as the in-house human resource point of contact.

**Budget Analyst** is responsible for the accurate and timely processing of accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll and other accounting procedures within the Academy. The Budget Analyst also coordinates budget development and monitoring and performs a variety of other professional accounting and administrative duties.

**MIS** maintains the computer networks for both staff and the Cadet Computer Lab. MIS researches, installs, repairs, and maintains all software, hardware, and peripheral devices for the

Academy. MIS maintains and checks out the Academy laptops, digital projectors, digital cameras, video cameras, and overhead projectors. MIS is the point of contact for NGB and maintains the database that reports directly to the national level for each ChalleNGe Academy. **Medical Technician** reports to the Support Services Supervisor and oversees medical needs of cadets while they are enrolled in the residential portion of the Academy. This includes coordinating sick calls and medication passes, managing cadets' medical records, scheduling off site medical/dental/vision appointments, overseeing and documenting urinalysis testing and results. The med tech coordinates the work of the dispensary and contract nurses who support cadet health.

**Medicine Passers & Registered Nurses** are variable hour employees who facilitate cadets' self-administration of medications, and who provide medical evaluation to cadets respectively. **Supply & Purchasing Technician** handles supply, inventory, vehicle coordination, transportation, and all services related to facilities and maintenance. All requests for logistical support go through the Supply Technician.

**Teaching Department:** This department conducts academic assessments, instruction, and interventions to support cadets' academic proficiency and performance.

**The Lead Teacher** is the Instructional Coordinator for the Montana Youth Challenge Academy. The position is responsible for directing and overseeing structured academic instruction, oversight and review of curriculum to ensure compliance with standards provided by the National Guard, Core Component Performance and Measurement Guide, oversight and review of curriculum to ensure that MYCA meets or exceeds all criteria for accreditation under Cognia/AdvancED, and activities that lead to the attainment of a HiSET certificate or an increase in estimated grade level for MYCA participants. The Lead Teacher establishes curriculum standards, develops and evaluates curriculum, supervises 4 FTE teachers, and performs program administration and classroom instruction duties. The Lead Teacher serves on the OMT and reports to the Deputy Director.

**The Teachers** are responsible for providing academic instruction leading to the attainment of a HiSET certificate or credit to return to high school, along with an increase in estimated grade level. There are four subject teachers at the Academy: English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. The teachers research and develop curriculum, monitor and evaluate academic and life coping skills development, provide academic input during discipline hearings of the platoon quads, perform classroom and program administration duties, and other duties as assigned to support MYCA mission and goals. Teachers report to the MYCA Lead Teacher and do not directly supervise other MYCA personnel.

**Academy Operational Teams:** The Academy functions through operational teams that are tasked with retaining cadets, and supporting their development in all program requirements. There are two inter-departmental levels of teams: the Platoon Quadrangle ("Quad") and the Operations Management Team. Below is a summary of their activities. A complete discussion of their responsibilities, practices, and scope of work is provided in Appendix C: [Cadet Retention and Re-Engagement SOP](#).

**The Platoon Quad:** Representatives from each of the four operations departments form Platoon Quads. The Quads facilitate the progress and retention of all cadets on the caseload. They develop collaborative, inter-departmental interventions to support cadets. Each week, the Platoon Quads will:

- Review the progress of each cadet on the caseload;
- Discuss cadets exhibiting difficulties with behavior or progress;

- Develop interventions, using the tools of each department as indicated;
- Assess the effectiveness of past interventions;
- Conduct Quad Boards as needed, and/or refer cadets to the OMT Discipline Board.
- Report progress, interventions, and intervention outcomes to the Deputy Director weekly.

**The Operations Management Team (OMT):** The OMT leads the operational departments of the Academy. It oversees the activities of the Platoon Quads and cultivates collaboration across all departments to support the Academy mission. OMT members include the Lead Academic Counselor, Licensed School Counselor, Commandant, Post-Residential Coordinator, and the Lead Teacher. The Deputy Director oversees this team and its activities. The OMT establishes uniform procedures for firm, fair, and consistent treatment of all cadets, including the development of incentives, rewards, and discipline outcomes.

The OMT meets weekly to manage operational issues and plan interventions for cadets with behavioral or academic concerns who have not responded to quad-level interventions. It also convenes:

- To serve at the Acclimation Board, with input from Admissions Counselors, Academic Counselors, Medical Technician, and Lead CI's.
- To discuss and evaluate equalities in Quad board decisions and actions.
- To serve as the Academy Discipline Board.
- At the Director or Deputy Director's discretion.
- To validate phase movement.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Staff Standards of Conduct**

1. As an employee of the State of Montana and the Department of Military Affairs all ChalleNGe staff will adhere to the [DMA Standards of Conduct \(DMA Policy 3-0180\)](#).
2. Staff of the Montana Youth ChalleNGe Academy are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that supports the goals and philosophies of the Academy.
3. Staff will recognize that they are tasked with working with at-risk youth and will understand that they are seen in the community as representative of the Academy on and off duty, including on social media.
4. Staff will not engage in criminal activity.
5. Staff will report any law violations other than routine traffic violations to their supervisor

at their first opportunity.

6. Challenge Academy staff will ensure that they do not wear Youth ChalleNGe logos or other articles of clothing that is considered representative of the Academy while participating in an activity that may not be viewed as supporting the mission of the organization (i.e. consuming alcohol at a public event, or patronizing a bar or tavern).
7. Staff members will be honest in all actions.
8. Staff members will uphold a drug-free work environment. This includes abstaining from the use of drugs that are federally classified as controlled substances at all times (on or off duty), and abstaining from the use of alcohol within 8 hours of duty. Staff will submit to initial pre-employment drug testing, and random testing thereafter.
9. Staff will abide by the tobacco-free campus policy at the University of Montana Western by abstaining from the use of all tobacco or nicotine-bearing products while on duty and while on campus. Products will not be visible through clothing attire.
10. Staff members will not engage in sexual intimacies on the work site to include any use of pornographic materials. No sexual insults, comments or discussions will occur.
11. Staff members will never engage in abuse of any form toward cadets. Example: Reducing meal portions/content; withholding mail and deprivation of sleep, threat of physical or emotional harm shall not be used as disciplinary measures and will NOT be tolerated.
12. Staff will refrain from the use of crude or vulgar language (swearing with staff or cadets), name calling, or any form of communication which could be seen as verbally abusive.
13. Staff will not horseplay, wrestle, or joke around with cadets.
14. Staff will respect and honor the personal rights of others.
15. Staff will not speak in an official capacity on behalf of MYCA, either in private or public settings, unless designated by the Director to do so. In all other cases, staff will defer to the Director to perform this role.

**Prohibited Practices:** National Guard Bureau has articulated clear guidelines that the ChalleNGe Academy staff must adhere to at all times when working with the cadets. ChalleNGe is an educational project: staff instruct, guide, and redirect cadets in its standards. Any tactics of engagement that employ coercion, intimidation, threats, or actual harm to cadets are expressly and strictly prohibited. Failure to observe these prohibitions may result in serious disciplinary actions against the staff member to include termination of employment or criminal charges. Prohibited acts include:

- A) **Hitting or forcefully touching a cadet:** Hitting, pushing, or any type of physical contact towards a cadet is absolutely forbidden. This includes wrestling, shadow boxing, arm wrestling, or any other physical games. NOTE: In cases where a cadet is escalated, staff will use approved MAB physical redirection techniques as needed. Staff will never be the aggressor when dealing with an escalated cadet. Staff may only use the physical intervention necessary to deescalate a cadet who is an imminent threat to themselves or others. [Reference MYCA Policy Letter #004- Hands Off](#)

### Leadership.

- B) **Obscene language:** Obscene language includes profane, vulgar, or otherwise offensive speech. In a professional, public-facing environment like the Academy, the use of such language is prohibited. Such language may not be used by staff members or cadets.
- C) **Verbal abuse:** Staff may not engage in taunts, name-calling, or other forms of verbal abuse toward cadets, including as a tactic to compel compliance. Verbal attacks by staff on a cadet's appearance, religion, background, prior performance, or any other issues are abusive, and may be considered harassment.
- D) **Sexual comments:** At no time should sexual advances or comments be made to a cadet. This includes inappropriate jokes.

**Staff Training & Development:** National Guard Youth Challenge Programs are unique in terms of theoretical basis, operational procedures, and scope of outcomes. For these reasons, all staff, regardless of position or professional background, are required to undergo extensive training at the outset of employment and ongoing throughout each staff member's tenure with the Academy.

Staff training occurs through (1) initial onboarding at the time of hire, (2) position-specific training through our Staff Trainer and through The Spectrum Group's "Challenge-U" online learning platform, (3) our semi-annual Train Up Weeks, and (4) ongoing as indicated by performance reviews and professional development goals. The National Guard Bureau, the State of Montana, and the Academy's Director each set training standards for staff. These are detailed in the Director's Yearly Training Guidance, and in the corresponding Yearly Training Calendar. The Staff Training Coordinator is responsible to deploy the resources necessary to meet the training standards.

Each staff member is responsible to attend and actively participate in required training events, especially the semi-annual Train Up Week intensives that occur prior to each class in mid January and mid July. These weeks are listed in the MYCA Academy Calendar at least twelve months in advance, so that staff can plan accordingly.

The few staff who cannot attend these events will be given the opportunity to make up training within three weeks of the missed event(s). Staff will coordinate with their supervisor and with the Staff Training Coordinator to determine how make-up training may occur. *NOTE: Staff who are "expired" on training requirements will not be authorized to work until those requirements have been completed.*

This Academy is a dynamic work environment that upholds the Army ethos that "all are infantry." Staff may draw from a wide range of professional backgrounds and expertise, and will discover new strengths and affinities through the work we do. All staff are expected to provide between one and three professional goals annually, to review bi-annually with your supervisor. All staff are

strongly encouraged to take advantage of internal and external opportunities for ongoing professional development.

**Staff Dress Code:** This policy provides guidance concerning personal appearance and appropriate attire for Montana Youth Challenge Academy employees. It has three goals:

1. **Professionalism:** Staff will consistently present an image of professionalism and respect for our shared mission in all work activities and settings, and with all stakeholders including cadets, families, colleagues, and members of the public.
2. **Safety:** Attire will maximize and maintain safety in all work environments.
3. **Quasi-military culture:** Attire will promote the ethos of pride and discipline found in the services. Cadre Department staff and cadets will specifically follow the standards of grooming, hair, and uniform articulated in [Army Regulation 670-01](#).

**Supervisors:** have the responsibility to model and enforce these standards for appearance and attire. Due to the diversity of our work functions and locations, appropriate attire standards may vary according to duties and settings. Supervisors may make exceptions for special, non-routine occasions. Supervisors will communicate with the Deputy Director and/or Department of Military Affairs' Human Resources Officer to redirect any employee who repeatedly or egregiously fails to comply with the Staff Dress Code. Employees will communicate with their supervisor in advance to request any non-standard dress.

**Employees:** are expected to present a professional appearance appropriate for their workplace and duties. Employees must exert sound judgment in their choice of clothing to wear to work, in consideration of the priorities listed above. Employee attire, appearance, and hygiene must present an appropriate, positive image for co-workers and customers. Employees are responsible to ensure that their attire is safe, inoffensive, and in good repair.

**Policy:** Employees of the Montana Youth Challenge Academy are expected to follow “business casual” dress standards during normal operations (i.e. when the program is in session, and/or employees can expect to interact with stakeholders.)

The only alterations to this expectation will be (1) during unique activities such as the Birch Creek week or facility improvements, which require comfortable or athletic clothes or (2) for special events including but not limited to JMG Banquets, Legislator/Educator Airlifts, and Graduations, when staff should dress to a “business formal” standard of attire. Slight modifications can be made by the supervisor based on the employee’s duties, workplace, safety, and the need to present a professional appearance to others. Although not intended to be an all-inclusive list, the specific standards reflected below help create a safe and appropriate work environment free from unnecessary distraction.

**All employees will follow these guidelines:**

- Hair and personal grooming: well-kept hair, good personal hygiene, and general grooming should be observed. Cologne and perfume should not be used in excess;
- Attire: should be appropriately fitted to the employee’s body and should be clean, unwrinkled, and professional in appearance. Examples of appropriate attire include: collared shirts, blouses, logo-wear shirts (with/without collars, and sleeveless blouses), business casual skirts, pants, ties, dresses, slacks, trousers, sports jackets, sweaters, footwear designed for business purposes.
- Shoes: will be close-toed, well fitted, and appropriate to our work setting, in which

responses to issues with cadets may be required of any staff member at any time.

- Shorts: may be worn when the program is not in session. These must be knee-length, in good repair, and designed for business rather than athletic activities.
- Jewelry: should be worn in good taste, with no visible body piercings
- “Casual Fridays”: Dark wash denim pants or skirts, which are in good repair and are not faded or distressed, may be worn on Fridays and when staff are working but are unlikely to encounter VIPs.

**Male employees will follow these specific guidelines:**

- Men’s hair will not fall over the ears or touch the collar. Hair should not appear ragged, unkempt, or extreme in appearance.
- Facial hair should be short and neatly trimmed; neither mustaches or beards will extend below the jaw line or be more than ½” in length off the chin.
- Mustaches and beards will not extend onto the neck or over the lip. If a male staff member has a beard, it will be neatly shaved at the jaw line.

**Female employees will follow these specific guidelines:**

- Women will not wear shoes with excessively high heels; blocked heels with less than two inches are acceptable with consideration to staff safety and ability to respond to operation conditions.
- Hair and make-up should promote naturally occurring tones and features, and should not include colors or tones that do not occur naturally.
- Jewelry that is excessively large, dangling, sharp, or otherwise should be avoided in consideration of staff safety when participating in operations.
- Business casual blouses without sleeves need to have a two inch shoulder width; spaghetti straps are not permitted.

**Prohibited attire that is considered unprofessional includes, but is not limited to:**

- Athletic or “athleisure” wear such as t-shirts, sweat shirts, sweat pants, yoga pants, spandex, swim trunks, tank tops, or basketball shorts;
- Clothing that is excessively worn, frayed, or displaying holes, stains, or tears in the fabric;
- Clothing that reveals typically covered parts of the body including upper thighs, buttocks, groin, torso, back, or chest/cleavage;
- Clothing that communicates or depicts political messages, drugs, alcohol, smoking, sex, weapons, violence, or that is obscene or disrespectful; Offensive tattoos (if existing, the tattoo(s) shall be covered either by clothing or other means. “Offensive” is generally defined as those tattoos that are considered offensive based upon the reasonable person’s standard.

**Cadre Department members will follow these specific guidelines:**

- At formations on the pad, Cadre uniforms will match the cadet uniform of the day. *For example, if the cadets are in BBG’s, all Cadre Instructors will also be in BBG’s.*
- Hands will not be in pockets of trousers, jacket, or sweatshirt etc.
- When the uniform includes a jacket or coat, this garment will be zipped up.
- Covers will be worn at all times, both inside and outside of buildings.
- Gloves will not be multi-colored.
- Cadre staff members do not wear jewelry while in a “duty” status.
  - Exceptions to this policy are:
    - Necklaces worn inside the shirt and not visible
    - Post earrings that do not dangle
    - Rings, bracelets, or watches
- Female Cadre Instructors must follow the Army standards for hair and grooming.
- Male Cadre Instructors must follow the Army standards for hair and grooming.

**Class A Uniform (Duty Uniform)**

1. Coyote Brown boots. No less than 8 inches of ankle rise.

2. Multicam Trousers.
3. Belt will be Khaki brown, military style with a conservative military style belt buckle.
4. Black long sleeve or short sleeve shirt with MYCA “Rise Up” logo on left (last name is optional.)
5. If an under garment is worn under the black shirt, it cannot be any other color than black, white, or gray short sleeve or black long sleeve undershirt.
6. Cover with MYC Academy logo and rank insignia or black or green form fitted to head (skull cap) style beanie. MYCA, National Guard, and Army are the only authorized logos on beanies.

#### **Class B Uniform (Soft Uniform & Casual Friday)**

1. Shoes will not be open toed. Boots, shoes, or sneakers may be worn.
2. Trousers will be full length (no shorts.) Black jeans, casual trousers, or dark blue jeans may be worn. No holes, worn out areas, or wear marks are acceptable.
3. If trousers have belt loops a belt will be worn. Belts will be black, ACU, Khaki brown, AF blue, Olive drab green in color. Belt buckle will be conservative, military style. No multi colored, pictured, or logos will be visible.
4. Black long sleeve or short sleeve shirt with MYCA logo on left (last name is optional.)
5. If an under garment is worn under the black shirt, it cannot be any other color than black, white, or gray short sleeve or black long sleeve.
6. Cover or beanie is optional. If worn, cover must have a MYC Academy logo. Rank on cover is optional in Class B uniform. If a beanie is worn it must be black or green form fitting to head (skull cap) style beanie. The only authorized logo on beanie is MYCA, National Guard or Army.

#### **Class C Uniform (PT Uniform)**

- Sneakers.
- Black, Maroon, Grey Sweats or shorts. Youth Challenge, National Guard or Army are the only authorized logos. No spandex or skin fit garments are acceptable.
- Black long sleeve or short sleeve shirt with MYCA logo on left.
- If an under garment is worn under the black shirt, it cannot be any other color than black, white or gray short sleeve or black long sleeve shirt.
- Cover is optional in PT uniform. If worn, cover with MYC Academy logo or black or green form fitting to head (skull cap) style beanie. Cold weather black or green form fitting to head (skull cap) style beanie is authorized when outside air temperature is 40 degrees F or below.
- If beanie is worn only logos authorized are MYCA, National Guard or Army.

**Exceptions** to this policy will be made to accommodate religious beliefs or medical needs. The staff member requesting an exception shall be responsible to make the request in writing to his or her direct supervisor, and to work proactively with the supervisor to develop a reasonable accommodation that does not interfere with the professionalism and safety of the workplace. Additionally, management may not discriminate or enforce clothing standards based upon gender, age, or cultural differences.

**Enforcement** consists of informal counseling to resolve situations regarding an individual employee's noncompliance with this guidance. Failure to correct an identified problem that has been addressed by a supervisor may result in formal counseling or other disciplinary action.

**Staff Discipline Handling:** The following summary is adapted from the [State of Montana's Staff Discipline Handling Guide](#). The purpose of this summary is to give staff an understanding of the processes by which discipline issues are handled if they arise. This summary is not exhaustive, and does not preclude accelerated discipline if circumstances warrant. All discipline issues fall into two categories:

**Performance-** The employee's competence at their job, and fulfillment of all assigned duties

**Conduct-** The employee's management of work relationships, and adherence to the policies, laws, and ethics that guide the Academy.

When a staff member is deficient in either category, discipline is warranted.

**Support** of employees occurs through the hiring process, onboarding process, new hire and ongoing staff training, informal mentors on shift or in the department, regular coaching by the supervisor and maintaining a professional development plan. All of which ensure you are the right person for the position, that you have tools, knowledge and training necessary to perform your responsibilities with growing competence.

**Informal Discipline** occurs through coaching with the supervisor, informal verbal warning documented with a memorandum for record placed in the staff member's employee file. This process is to provide early redirection when performance issues arise or counsel on low-level problems with conduct.

**Formal Discipline** can include a formal verbal warning, formal written warning, performance improvement plan, administrative leave with/without pay, disciplinary demotion and/or termination. This progressive discipline is a means to respond to repeated low-level incidents or underperformance or misconduct or to respond to a single incident of serious underperformance or misconduct.

**Staff Conflict Prevention & Intervention:** The Academy is an exciting, but occasionally stressful work environment. Staff must make fast decisions and respond to changing circumstances. Conflict can occur, even between well-meaning staff who are performing adequately and conducting themselves appropriately. Below is a summary of expectations for all staff to prevent or manage conflicts:

- a. Prevent conflict:
  - i. Be the expert at your own job and do it to the best of your ability.
  - ii. Advocate for yourself- request the training and knowledge that you need to perform better.
  - iii. Refrain from critiquing your colleagues- this is the responsibility of their supervisor.
  - iv. Be prepared to execute plans A, B, or C within your field of activity each day.
  - v. Recognize when cadets upset you, and get help from other staff members to re-engage them if you cannot do so appropriately.
  - vi. Ask for support and input from other staff.

- vii. *Never* argue with or undermine your colleagues in front of cadets- keep it private.
- b. Address conflict at the lowest level possible:
  - i. Check in with your colleague when you experience tension or have a disagreement- do you really have a problem “with each other” or is the problem something you can put on the table to solve together?
  - ii. Notify your direct supervisor of the tension immediately- s/he can facilitate a conversation between you and your colleague if needed. If the other party to the conflict is your supervisor, or your supervisor is not available, the Deputy Director will facilitate.
- c. Recognize when a conflict needs to move up the Chain of Command:
  - i. The conflict is ongoing, despite your attempts to prevent/resolve in the ways previously described.
  - ii. The conflict is affecting your professional performance or conduct.
  - iii. You believe you have grounds to claim harassment or a hostile work environment. These are serious claims that will be referred to the Department of Military Affairs Human Resources Officer, Damien Marecich, for investigation. Be sure you understand the implications the claims you are making before you use these terms.

**Principles of Leadership:** The Arm’s Eleven Leadership Principles are excellent guidelines for staff interacting with cadets or colleagues. These principles are also taught to cadets.

*“Leadership is getting someone to do what you want him to do, because he wants to do it.”*  
**-Dwight D. Eisenhower**

**Know Yourself and Seek Self Improvement:** To know yourself, you have to understand who you are and know your strengths and weaknesses. Knowing yourself allows you to take advantage of your strengths and work to overcome your weaknesses. Seeking self-improvement means continually developing your strengths as well as working to overcome your weaknesses. This will increase your competence and the confidence cadets have in your ability to train and lead. Having a working knowledge of the Academy as a whole, not just your department, will increase your value to the organization.

**Be Technically and Tactically Proficient:** You are expected to be technically and tactically proficient at your job. This means you have the ability to accomplish all tasks to standard that are required to accomplish the mission. In addition, you are responsible for training cadets to complete their tasks and develop them into productive citizens. You must strive to be the subject matter expert as cadets will be looking to you for guidance on a daily basis.

**Seek Responsibility and Take Responsibility for Your Actions:** Leading always involves responsibility. You want subordinates who can handle responsibility and help you perform your mission. Similarly, you should encourage cadets to take initiative. When you see a problem or

something that needs to be fixed, do not wait for someone to tell you to act. You must avoid evading responsibility by placing the blame on someone else. Your objective should be to build trust between you and your leaders and between you and your cadets.

**Make Sound and Timely Decisions:** You must be able to rapidly assess situations and make sound decisions. If you delay or try to avoid making a decision, you may enhance a negative situation. Indecisive leaders create hesitancy, loss of confidence, and enhance a negative situation. You must be able to anticipate and reason under the most trying conditions and quickly decide what actions to take. Here are some guidelines to help you lead effectively:

- ✓ **Gather essential information before making your decision.**
- ✓ **Consider the short and long-term effects of your decision.**
- ✓ **Seek guidance from your peers or supervisor if you can.**

**Set the example:** Of all the leadership principles, this one may be the most important at ChalleNGe. Cadets need a positive role model. Whatever you expect from the cadets you supervise, you must demonstrate those traits yourself, on the floor, in your office or in your classroom. Cadets will imitate your behavior. You must set high, but attainable standards, be willing to do what you require of the cadets, and share challenges and hardships with them.

**Know Your Cadets and Look Out for Their Well Being:** You must know and care for the cadets you supervise. You need to understand what directed them to the Academy, and what factors are keeping them in the Academy. Remember: once a cadet leaves the ChalleNGe Academy, we lose our ability to help them. Each day you need to commit time and effort to listen and learn about your cadets.

When you show genuine concern for your cadets they will trust and respect you as a leader. What you must always remember is if you earn the cadets' trust, they will work to help you accomplish your mission. They will never want to let you down. You must care for them by training them for the rigors they will face in the outside world. While here, ensure you take care of their physical and safety needs when possible, and discipline and reward fairly. If a cadet thinks you don't care about them, they will make your job much more difficult.

**Keep Cadets Informed:** ChalleNGe cadets perform better when they know why they are doing something. Keeping the cadet informed helps them make better decisions, encourage initiative, improve teamwork, and enhance morale. The cadets will look for logic in your orders and question things that do not make sense. They will expect you to keep them informed and, when possible, explain reasons for your directives. Remember that the cadets should not question your authority; however, they may question the reasoning behind the directive.

**Develop a Sense of Responsibility in Your Cadets:** ChalleNGe cadets feel a sense of pride and responsibility when they successfully accomplish a new task you give them. Delegation indicates you trust your cadets and will make them want even more responsibility. As a leader you are a teacher and responsible for developing the cadets. Give them challenges and opportunities they can handle. Give them more responsibility when they show you they are ready. Do not knowingly put a cadet into a position where you know they will fail (leadership position, or a position to make a bad decision.)

**Ensure the Task is Understood, Supervised, and Accomplished:** ChalleNGe cadets must understand what you expect from them. They need to know what you want done, what the standard is, and when you want it done. When cadets are learning a new task, tell them what you want done and show how you want it done, then let them try. Watch their performance. Accept performance that meets your standards, reward performance that exceeds your standards, and lastly, correct performance that does not meet your standards.

Determine the cause of poor performance and take appropriate action. (Train, train, train, if you don't know, ask for help.) When you hold the cadets accountable for their performance they realize they are responsible for accomplishing missions as individuals and as teams. Even as cadets progress through phases of freedom, staff must still supervise them. You must still ensure standards are met. Cadets are in charge, but staff are responsible for what goes on.

**Build the Team:** Success of the cadets at ChalleNGe is a team activity. You must develop a team spirit among cadets that motivates them to go willingly and confidently into any situation they are placed in. Cadets need confidence in your abilities to teach them and in their abilities to perform as productive members of society. You must train and cross train the cadets until they are confident in the team and in themselves. Platoons become a team only when cadets trust and respect you and each other as trained professionals and see the importance of their contributions to the Academy as a whole. Building a platoon does not involve demeaning another platoon in any manner. If observed in this manner, disciplinary action could be involved.

**Employ Cadets in Accordance with Their Capabilities:** The cadets involved in the ChalleNGe Academy have certain capabilities as well as limitations. You are responsible to recognize both. The cadets will gain satisfaction from performing tasks that are challenging but reasonable. Do not under-task the cadets or they will simply become frustrated. This can also become the case if you overestimate their ability. Your challenge as a staff member will be to attain, sustain, and enforce high standards from your cadets through tough and consistent training and enforcement of standards.

**Summary:** The factors and principles of leadership will help you deal with the cadet and accomplish your mission of cadet development. This development comes with care, concern, and consistency. These factors of leadership should always be present and affect what you should do and when you do it. Cadets cannot always be led in the same way. You must correctly assess the cadets' competence, commitment, and motivation so that you can take the correct leadership actions. As a leader you must know who you are, what you know, and what you can do so that you can discipline yourself and lead your cadets effectively. Every situation is unique. What worked in one situation may not work in another. You must be able to look at every situation and determine what action to take.

**Leadership Responsibilities:** Leadership is defined as “*Influencing* people—by providing *purpose*, *direction*, and *motivation*—while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the organization.”

**Providing Purpose** gives people a reason why they should do difficult things under stressful conditions. Priorities must be set, and the importance of the task is explained. Then focus the student on the task so that they will function in an efficient and disciplined manner. These cadets are from the “why” generation. Give them the “why”.

**Providing Direction** gives people an orientation of tasks to be completed based on the priorities

set by the leader. The standards of the Academy provide the direction. The standards you establish and enforce will give your students order and discipline. Tough training will give them confidence in themselves, the team, and the Academy as a whole.

**Providing Motivation** gives people the will to do everything they are capable of doing to complete a task. What motivates each of us is different. Find out what motivates your cadets, and use it to get them to achieve the standard. We only have so much negative motivation, therefore the more positive motivation we use the better off we are.

## **8 Troop Leading Procedures**

### **1. Receive and Analyze the Mission**

- a. The leader normally receives his orders as a verbal operation order (OPORD) or as a FRAGO. Upon receipt of the order, his first task is to extract his mission from the commander's overall plan. If he is unable to understand the commander's intent, he should ask the commander for further clarification. The leader should examine his unit's specific tasks, what the commander told him to do in the order. The leader should then identify his unit's implied tasks, those tasks not in the OPORD but that still must be done to complete the mission. Finally, once all tasks are identified, the leader should conduct reverse planning to ensure that all tasks can be accomplished in the time available and to make most efficient use of the time available. The leader then needs to restate his mission, answering the questions of who, what, when, where, and why.

### **2. Issue a Warning Order**

- a. After the leader has analyzed his orders and worked out his mission and related tasks, he must quickly pass this information to his subordinate leaders. This is accomplished through the warning order. As a minimum, the following information must be included: To whom the warning order applies. The time and nature of the operation. The earliest time of movement. The time and place the OPORD will be issued. The leader should issue an overlay of the area of operations. In the absence of further orders, this gives the unit an idea of the scope of the operation. Also, the leader should inform his subordinates of the results of his reverse planning process and delegate appropriate preparatory tasks to his NCOIC and subordinate leaders. The leader should include task organization. All elements should acknowledge receipt of the warning order.

### **3. Make a Tentative Plan**

- a. Once the warning order is issued, the leader must determine how he will accomplish his mission. He puts the tasks identified when he received his order into battle sequence, the order in which he expects to accomplish his task. He makes a tentative plan for ultimate mission accomplishment. He must choose the best course of action based on the advantages and disadvantages of each course.

### **4. Initiate Movement**

- a. After completing the other steps, initiate movement. He may send a quartering party out to a new assembly area, or he may move his whole unit. Whatever the case, the leader should at least be able to determine when the platoon will move.

### **5. Conduct Reconnaissance**

- a. This step of the troop-leading procedures allows the leader to confirm the validity of his tentative plan. He should at least confirm his initial march route to the start point and check initial positions. The leader must conduct the reconnaissance with an open mind; not everything he sees will match his tentative plan. He must be flexible enough to change and competent enough to work out a new plan swiftly. The leader should be able to bring the

tentative plan close to completion after his reconnaissance. He should continue to refine the plan based on new information from his parent unit commander, other leaders, or his own troops. **6. Complete the Plan**

- a. The leader completes the plan based on the reconnaissance and any changes in the situation. He/she should review the mission, as they received it from the commander, to ensure that the plan meets the requirements of the mission and stays within the framework of the commander's intent.

#### **7. Issue the Order**

- a. The order should be issued to all the subordinate leaders. Once everyone has arrived at the place and time indicated in the warning order, the leader should set up his vehicle commanders in the order in which they will maneuver. To use his time efficiently, the leader should use a walk-through rehearsal as part of his briefing. The leader issues his finalized order. He refers to notes while giving his orders to make sure he does not forget anything. He ensures that subordinate leaders understand the entire plan as well as their particular portion of it.

To ensure complete understanding of the operation, he should end the order with a back-brief of key points by his subordinate leaders.

#### **8. Supervise and Refine**

- a. The leader and NCOIC make sure all members have been briefed by their leaders and understand the mission and concept of the operation. Subordinate leader briefings and rehearsals are essential to a successful operation. They should conduct an inspection once the subordinate leaders report that they are prepared. Flexibility is the key to effective operations. The leader must be able to refine his plan as new information becomes available. If he adjusts his plan, he must inform his unit. Once the operation has begun, the leader must be able to adapt quickly to new situations and new orders.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Cadet Retention and Re-engagement**

**Overview:** Our system of cadet retention and re-engagement exists to continuously increase each cadet's commitment to self-improvement and life success, and to cement their progress in meeting all program standards. This system includes (1) effective and engaging instruction, (2) incentives and positive feedback to reward progress, (3) progressive discipline, and (4) data-informed interventions to redirect cadets whose behaviors impede their progress. The summary below outlines this system. Its full articulation is in the [Cadet Retention and Re-engagement SOP](#).

**Priorities:** The safety and welfare of cadets and staff is the highest priority of operations at all times. Without basic safety, there can be no progress in the program. Once safety is established including its physical, emotional, and psychological conditions- instruction in the program can begin, and cadet progress toward all aspects of personal development begins with it. The order of priorities within the scope of cadet retention and re-engagement is:

- a. **Safety** with self and others at all times;
- b. **Commitment** to success, including ongoing safety, personal growth, graduation, and life achievement;

- c. **Progress** toward achieving all standards in the program;
- d. Ongoing **identification and elimination of obstacles to success** in academic, behavioral, relational, or environmental areas of experience.

**Responsibilities:** The **Director** has overall responsibility to ensure proper procedures are being followed in reference to assignment of discipline and board actions. The Director is the final decision maker regarding cadet retention and re-engagement.

The **Deputy Director** is responsible to oversee the training and practices of the Academy's staff and to develop its programs and procedures, in order to fulfill the Academy's mission. The Deputy Director develops, manages, and inspects the procedures articulated in this SOP, and regularly communicates the progress of individual cadets and classes of cadets to the Director and to other leaders. The Deputy Director facilitates disciplinary interventions with the Operations Management Team (OMT). The **Operational Department Leads** (Lead Academic Counselor, Licensed School Counselor, Commandant, Post-Residential Mentor Coordinator, and Lead Teacher) facilitate their respective departments' fulfillment of activities within the system, and represent their departments' perspectives on the Operations Management Team.

The **Commandant** is the Academy's chief disciplinarian, who implements firm, fair, and consistent feedback to cadets following behavioral incidents. The **members of the Operational Departments** (Academic Counselors, Lead Cadre Instructors, Post-Residential Case Managers, and Teachers) form student engagement teams ("Quads") that work with each platoon. **All staff** engage and re-engage cadets through daily interactions, and document each cadet's behavior and progress in the Core Components.

**After Action Reviews and Planning:** At the start of each Residential Phase, the Deputy Director presents cadet retention goals, methods, and practices that will be implemented. He or she reports weekly progress to the Director. Following each incentive event, and at the end of each class, the Deputy Director facilitates after action reviews by collecting staff and cadet feedback. Following consultation with the Director and relevant staff, any changes that are recommended are then added to the SOP associated with the event, program, or practice.

**Staff Duty to Maintain Compliance:** All staff will recognize that cadet retention and re-engagement are ongoing projects. "Success" means that each cadet's commitment increases over time, and that more cadets progress from acclimation until graduation. Achieving this outcome requires staff to leverage every cadet interaction for these purposes, and to revise their own methods, approaches, and practices whenever their interactions have not contributed to success.

### **Cadet Retention and Re-engagement Tools and Terms:**

**The Cadet Code of Conduct** is a positive articulation of the integrity, pride, and self-discipline that a Challenge graduate embodies. It is both guideline and goal post, and it forms the basis for the Academy's school culture. All staff should be familiar with it, and should post it visibly in the work environment for ongoing reference.

**Positive Behavior Management:** Youth, like all people, will be motivated by their own unique factors. While some are capable of delaying gratification solely for the purpose of achieving some long term goal, most need feedback and encouragement along the way. This Positive Behavior Management Menu outlines the behaviors, tools, and timescale that are

encompassed in our programs.

Positive Behavior	Response	Tool Timescale
All cadets, to establish or continue rapport	Eye contact and personal greeting	Seconds; practice this at the start of the day, a class, a shift, or arrival to any new instruction setting
Basic appropriateness (i.e. standing still, giving eye contact, not speaking out of turn)	Verbal acknowledgement (“ <i>I see that Cadet X is in it to win it today!</i> ”)	Minutes; practice this as soon as appropriateness is achieved and then frequently and randomly to reinforce positive behavior.
Cadet tries out appropriate method of coping with emotions	Verbal acknowledgement; if trial does de-escalate consider a time-out (minutes)	Few minute debrief
Cadet makes a decision to give up a negative behavior	Challenge Buck or Positive Spot Report	Within the day provide positive feedback
Cadet goes above-and-beyond to make progress or to encourage others	Department Coin of Excellence	Days to Weeks
Cadet makes consistent progress	Weekly Assessment = Phase Movement & Passes	Weeks to Months
Cadet makes exemplary progress	Senior Cadet status and special activities (Color Guard, high profile STC’s)	Weeks to Months

**“Verbal Redirection” has four parts:**

State the Behavior	State the Expectation	State the Consequence	Offer Choices
Ex- Cadet X, I saw you trying to pass a note to another cadet	At the Academy that is called fraternizing, and it's not allowed	If you fraternize, I cannot allow you to attend this event and could lose other privileges.	You can stand by me until the event is over. You can take responsibility and hand over the note. You can have a discussion with staff member xyz to discuss fraternization.

**Progressive Discipline:** The disciplinary system at the ChalleNGe Academy is progressive in nature. While staff must consider that each cadet's starting point is different, all cadets will be held to the same standard of conduct, and will be expected to progress toward it. During the beginning stages of the ChalleNGe Academy, staff will take into account that cadets are adjusting to the quasi-military model; during this time, positive behavior will be weighted more heavily and negative behavior less heavily in the evaluation system. As cadets adjust to Academy rules and behavioral expectations, the weight of routine positive behavior will decrease while the weight of negative behavior will increase.

**Behavior Interventions:** All behaviors must receive prompt, fair feedback. Negative, unsafe, or inappropriate behavior requires direct, immediate intervention from staff. Repeating or egregious behaviors must also be documented in "behavior incident" reports. Such incidents are investigated and assessed by Cadre leaders (Team Leaders and the Commandant.) As indicated, these staff assign infractions and further consequences for the behaviors that were documented.

**Interventions Authority:** Our interventions don't work with all cadets. Occasionally it is necessary to try a different approach. We will not bury cadets in endless days of MOTO in cases where infractions and MOTO have not inspired behavior modification. We will try other interventions, including a mix of punitive and supportive options. Team Leaders have the authority to implement immediate interventions that last for the duration of their shift. Examples include placing a cadet on the phone with a supportive adult, banning a cadet from the DFAC for a day, or placing a cadet in temporary isolation for the night. The Director, the Deputy Director, and the Commandant determine any interventions (whether supportive or punitive) that extend beyond a single shift.

**Documenting Behavior- Information Reports:** Information Reports ("IR's") document a wide variety of incidents such as damage reports, conflicts, staff/cadet concerns, or Code of Conduct violations. Cadets may write and submit IR's anonymously to any staff member, but generally are directed to submit their concerns to the nearest CI. If a cadet submits an IR to you, it is your responsibility to complete the staff section of the form, and to investigate the concerns as needed before you submit the IR to the Team Leader on shift. IR's may be included with infractions, or may be generated as part of the investigation into a behavior incident. IR's alleging staff wrongdoing must be given to the supervisor of the staff member involved. It is the responsibility of the department head to communicate with the Deputy Director concerning staff members within their respective departments. The Deputy Director will coach department heads through whatever outcomes are necessary according to the recorded events.

**Documenting Behavior- Infractions:** All staff must know and understand the [infraction matrix](#) so that an appropriate level of discipline can be assigned. These infractions may not fit each and every violation, but they cover most cases and provide guidance that will help administer fair, firm and consistent discipline to all ChalleNGe Cadets generated as a result of the violation.

**Discipline Matrix:** Below is a visual matrix that demonstrates which interventions and documentation should take place according to the level of cadet behavior. It is critical to both the fairness and efficacy of our system that staff provide interventions as well as documentation, and

that staff not confuse one for the other. For reference, the Cadet Code of Conduct, Prohibited Acts, and Infraction Levels are documented in the Academy's Cadet Handbook. Definitions of bullying and conflict are also found there, and will serve as guidance for assessing all behavior that involves accusations of one or the other.

<b>Level</b>	<b>Interventions</b>	<b>Documentation</b>
Appropriate Behavior	Verbally recognize behavior,  Challenge Bucks & Coins  Give access to appropriate leadership and enrichment opportunities  Phase Movement	Weekly assessment  Annotate coins given  Positive spot reports  Phase Tracker
Level 1 Infraction	Verbal redirect  Assign Individual Physical Training (IPT)  Offer guidance for appropriately managing conflict  Front Load next interaction with positive attention and opportunity to demonstrate positive behavior	Staff notes  Collaboration with other staff as needed to enforce redirection
Level 2 or 3	Verbal redirect IPT  Temporarily remove cadet from setting  Offer guidance to cadet on properly managing conflict  Front Load next interaction with positive attention and opportunity to demonstrate	Infraction; Behavioral Referral in Infinite Campus if not addressed with IPT  Loss of points on Evaluation  Intervention plan in quad

	positive behavior  Assign “Moto” temporary loss of privileges to motivate change in behavior  Remove phase band if needed	
Level 4 or 5	Verbal Redirect  Mandate conflict medication if appropriate  Temporarily remove cadet from setting  Remove phase band  Remove/reduce pass privilege  Refer to law enforcement if appropriate  Initiate or accelerate discipline board process	Infraction; Behavioral Referral in Infinite Campus  Intervention Plan with Quad  Loss of points on evaluation  Recommend to Discipline Board  Discipline Outcomes

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Cadet Counseling

#### The Developmental Needs of Adolescents

- **Belonging:** The need to be accepted and loved by others.
- **Mastery:** The need to be good at something, rather than stay in a cycle of failure.
- **Independence:** The need to gain control of one’s destiny, rather than be at the mercy of others.
- **Generosity:** The need to give to others, rather than always receive.

#### Types of Counseling

**Personal and Performance Counseling:** The purpose of this section is to allow the staff member to become familiar with situations that may develop which will require counseling or coaching. The manner in which the staff member acts or reacts to a difficult situation is directly related to how appropriately the situation is resolved and if the activity continues.

- Set your expectations of performance on Day One.
- Work collaboratively and cooperatively with other staff to achieve best results.  
Let the cadets know what to expect from any activity you assign to them.

- Always set an example.
- Pace yourself.
- Do not let things get to you; maintain rational detachment.
- Look for the real messages behind a cadet's behavior (observe body language.)
- Give immediate feedback that is non-judgmental, supportive, and sincere.
- Focus on the individual and their needs, not your own concepts of what they "should need or do."
- Address an issue when it happens.
- Do not let teachable moments pass.
- Develop activities that are sequential and concrete.
- Ensure that outcomes are logical and related to behaviors, and that they occur quickly.
- Be flexible and prepared to think on your feet, but take a moment to consider your next steps if you are not sure what to do.

**Interaction Guidelines:** A structured and constant setting will decrease out of control behavior. Be consistent in your decisions and consequences. When a behavior becomes disruptive, do not allow it to build momentum. Address it immediately before the Cadet gets more emotionally attached to the behavior or situation. To bring about positive behavior change and to maintain it, utilize the guidelines below:

- Develop win-win relationships.
- You can be supportive and friendly, yet in control.
- The Cadet's greatest influence is not what you say, but what you do. Don't ask them to do anything you wouldn't or couldn't do yourself.
- Deal with misbehavior immediately.
- Provide encouragement.
- Listen to what is being said, and what is not being said.
- Reinforce positive change.
- Provide structure by development of rules that are firm, fair, and consistent.
- Encourage new behaviors and new ways of looking at situations.
- Do not react to a situation. *Pause, then act.*
- Change occurs with concentration on the positive rather than the negative.

**Problem Solving:** The following guidelines will help you in developing a consistent process to utilize with the cadets in solving problems in their lives. Also included are areas where people get stuck and prevent the process from being successfully completed.

- Define the Problem: This is the most critical of all the steps. The main task is to state the problem in behavioral terms that can be observed and understood by all. Statements of feelings must be tracked back to behaviors that are generating them. It must be able to pass "the here and now test." This states to solve a problem you must have the resources and capabilities at hand. Obstacles to this process are abstract words, over generalizing, or being unclear, communicating your assessment rather than behavior related feelings and getting sidetracked on other problems.
- Gather Facts: This is the brainstorming session to gather as much information on the problem as possible. The task is to ask for and obtain any missing data that might bear on the problem and solution. Blocks to obtaining these results are unsupported feelings or opinions, lethargy, cutting off the discussion, dwelling on past events, jumping to

conclusions, and premature decision making.

- **Identify Possible Alternatives:** Given a good problem statement and enough facts, certain “solutions” will readily present themselves. The trick is to not grab the first one or two, but to invite as many ideas and suggestions including the ideal for “far out” ones to come to mind. Then summarize, consider and amend each workable alternative. Blocks to this process may be attaching ideas to individuals, getting sidetracked by arguments, debates, and over-analyzing.
- **Select the Best Option:** Each option is considered in turn and tested for workability, which entails: how it relates to other tasks, the likely effects, and so on. For each option, data, which is felt to be significant, is restated while other data is rejected according to consensus. As a result of such questioning, one alternative generally emerges as the best and a solid commitment is then sought from the Cadet or group. Blocks to this may be lack of practical experience to predict the outcomes, confusing the idea with the individual, polarizing, and cutting off a discussion.
- **Take Action:** Once the best option has been selected and backed firmly by the Cadet, the task is to develop a plan of action. Identify specific responsibilities and adequate checks and follow up procedures. Blocks to this process may be failure to identify responsibilities, lack of involvement and follow up, and accepting excuses for lack of performance.

**“Foot Locker” Coaching:** Coaching cadets that present sensitive problems or issues to you must be handled in a different manner than the confronting style. The following are some guidelines of this type of counseling situation.

- Find a place to talk that is open, but where the conversation will not be overheard by others.
- Allow the discussion to be free from all distractions.
- Ensure that you have enough time to devote to the discussion.
- If you do not have enough time when you are approached by a cadet, then set a time and place to meet and discuss the problem.
- When you speak with the cadet, actively listen to understand.
- Go through the problem solving process with the cadet
- If you do not know what to do, refer the cadet to a counselor.
- Never put yourself in a situation where you are alone with a cadet (regardless of sex.)

Refer to the [MYCA Policy #001- The Rule of Three](#) for guidance.

**Honest Feedback:** The staff member will first observe the cadet’s performance of duty, his/her ability to complete an assignment, and his/her approach to accomplishing a mission. The staff then tells the cadet where he/she stands. Those things that have been done well or that show improvement must be praised. The contribution that the cadet’s performance has made should be noted. This reinforces the importance of his/her duties and helps foster cohesion. Feedback should also include ways to improve performance.

Performance counseling needs to be done continuously. The Academy’s development and phase accomplishment depend on each cadet’s ability to perform his/her duties and to act in a proper manner. Weekly evaluations will fulfill this requirement if assessments are taken seriously with improvement expected.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Safety and Medical Procedures**

**All-Staff Duties:** All staff are “safety officers” who must assess risks, prevent unsafe circumstances, and immediately intervene in emergencies that occur within our respective areas of operation and responsibility.

All staff must be CPR/First Aid certified. Staff will be given 30 days from the date of hire to get this certification completed. Failure to do so will result in you having to be certified off site at your expense. Failure to recertify during your scheduled class will result in you being placed in a leave without pay status until this is complete. All staff are expected to maintain awareness of cadets and other staff members, and to promptly communicate any observable medical issues that arise to a medical professional- see above for process.

#### **Role-Specific Responsibilities:**

**ChalleNGe Academy Medical Technician (“Med Tech”):** The Academy has an on-staff technician who addresses medical issues consistent with the EMT-B certification. Our Med Tech runs the administration of medication daily, maintains medical records, and arranges and transports cadets to medical appointments. If Med Tech is not available in an urgent medical situation, the TL or next responsible staff member will call the ER at Barrett Hospital for guidance.

**ChalleNGe Registered Nurse:** The Academy employs a registered nurse who sees cadets through established sick call times and procedures. The registered nurse, who operates under the direction of a medical director at Barrett Hospital and Healthcare, will make medical recommendations and or decisions based on their certification. No ChalleNGe staff member is qualified or authorized to make any diagnosis.

**Cadre Instructors, Including Team Leaders, and Other Instructors:** Cadre Instructors directly supervise cadets and maintain “accountability”- moment to moment awareness of the location and status of every cadet under their supervision. Teachers and Core Day instructors also hold these responsibilities whenever they are teaching. Cadre Instructors are usually the “first responders” in emergency situations of all types. Team Leaders or their designees coordinate communication among staff and outside entities during emergencies.

#### **Medical Process and Emergency Response Procedures: Medication**

**Dispensing:** The Medical Technician, the Team Leader, or their trained designees on duty conduct a “call for meds” to summon cadets who have prescriptions. Cadets are responsible to self-administer their own medication(s), and to follow the orders on the prescription. Licensed medical providers create these orders. MYCA staff merely facilitate cadets following them. Staff may not bring any medications, supplements, herbs, or other medicinal items from home to offer to cadets.

**Allergic Reactions:** Some cadets will be allergic to bee stings, penicillin or other substances.

The medical section will brief you on potential problems with cadets, but the cadet files should have any allergies of cadets documented. This information can be vital in an emergency, especially if you are away from the ChalleNGe Academy area. The Team Leaders will be responsible for making sure the first aid kits are taken to every off-site project. Cadets with allergies will wear yellow allergy identifying bracelets.

**Medical Emergencies:** Call for immediate assistance by sounding a “Code Blue” on the radio. If it appears to be a life threatening emergency call 911. If the event is a non-life threatening emergency, attempt to contact the Medical Technician (406-925-1568). If you can’t reach the Med Tech, refer to the [Commander’s Critical Incident Report](#) guidelines for the appropriate communication. If a cadet is taken to the ER, secure the Medical Book from the TL. **MAKE SURE ALL PAPERWORK RECEIVED FROM THE HOSPITAL IS PLACED IN THE MEDICAL TECHNICIAN’S MAILBOX ALONG WITH THE EMERGENCY ROOM CHECKLIST.**

**Physical Training (“PT”) Profiles:** Red wrist bands will be placed on any cadet who has physical limitations/restrictions. Yellow wrist bands will be placed on any cadet who is authorized to carry an inhaler, epi pen, diabetic supplies. Cadets on profile will be required to perform physical therapy as assigned by the medical department beginning at 0515 daily. Staff are not authorized to PT these cadets in the morning, however, they will enforce their physical therapy regime as assigned by competent authority.

**Other:** See the Medical Department SOP for further details.

**Temperature/Season-Related Emergency Procedures Heat Cramps** are painful involuntary muscle spasms that most often affect the calves, arms, abdominal muscles, and back. First aid includes rest, cooling off, and drinking an electrolyte-carbohydrate such as Gatorade or PowerAde if this is not available a mixture, such as juice and milk will substitute as an electrolyte-carbohydrate. Stretching, icing, and massaging the painful muscles may be helpful. Exercise should not be resumed until all symptoms have resolved.

**Heat Exhaustion** is caused by a combination of exercise induced heat and fluid and electrolyte loss as sweat. Signs and symptoms may start suddenly and include: nausea, dizziness, muscle cramps, feeling faint, headache, fatigue, and heavy sweating. Heat exhaustion is a serious condition because it can rapidly advance to the next stage, heat stroke, which can be fatal. Heat exhaustion must be vigorously treated by having the victim lie down in a cool place, taking off as many clothes as possible, cooling the victim with a cool water spray, and encouraging the victim to drink cool fluids, preferably containing carbohydrates and electrolytes.

**Heat Stroke** includes all the symptoms of heat exhaustion plus signs of central nervous system involvement, including dizziness, syncope, confusion, or seizures. The most important action by a first aid provider for a victim of heat stroke is to begin immediate cooling, preferably by immersing the victim up to the chin in cold water. It is also important to activate the EMS system. Heat stroke requires emergency treatment with intravenous fluids. Do not try to force the victim to drink liquids.

When summer temperatures exceed 95 degrees, all staff and students will remain inactive and

sheltered between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

**Sunburn** can occur due to sun exposure at any temperature, and at any time of year. Sunscreen must be worn whenever cadets are out in the sun even if just for a short period of time. It must be reapplied to exposed skin every two hours, or sooner if the cadet has perspired heavily or gotten wet. The cadets may also be instructed to incorporate SPF shirts into their uniform, depending on the weather and activity. Sunburns need to be documented in the nightly H&H inspection. A cadet with a severe sunburn- exhibiting blisters or peeling skin- need to report to Sick Call for assessment.

**Hypothermia** is caused by exposure to cold. The urgency of treatment depends on the length of exposure and the victim's body temperature. Begin rewarming a victim of hypothermia immediately by moving the victim to a warm environment, removing wet clothing, and wrapping all exposed body surfaces with anything at hand, such as blankets, clothing, and newspapers. If the hypothermia victim is far from definitive healthcare, begin active rewarming although the effectiveness of active rewarming has not been evaluated. Active rewarming should not delay definitive care. Potential methods of active rewarming include placing the victim near a heat source and placing containers of warm, but not hot, water in contact with the skin.

**Frostbite** usually affects an exposed part of the body such as the extremities and nose. In case of frostbite, remove wet clothing and dry and cover the victim to prevent hypothermia. Transport the victim to an advanced medical facility as rapidly as possible. Do not try to rewarm the frostbite if there is any chance that it might refreeze or if you are close to a medical facility. Minor or superficial frostbite (frostnip) can be treated with simple, rapid rewarming using skin-to-skin contact such as a warm hand. Severe or deep frostbite should be rewarmed within 24 hours of injury and this is best accomplished by immersing the frostbitten part in warm (37° to 40°C or approximately body temperature) water for 20 to 30 minutes. Chemical warmers should not be placed directly on frostbitten tissue because they can reach temperatures that can cause burns. Following rewarming, efforts should be made to protect frostbitten parts from refreezing and to quickly evacuate the patient for further care.

When winter temperatures fall below –20 degrees (wind-chill included), all staff and students will remain in a structure. Bombers, Gloves, Beanies will be worn when temperatures are below 40 Degrees.

## **Responding to Cadet Mental Health Emergencies**

Cadets sometimes react to the adversities of the program in unhealthy ways. While the Academy's admissions and acclimation assessments help staff to identify and support vulnerable individuals, mental health crises are not always preventable or predictable. The following protocols are specific to these emergencies:

**Suicidal Thoughts:** If, at any time, a cadet expresses suicidal ideation, including thoughts of dying, a specific plan for suicide, or an absence of thinking about the future, staff will respond immediately. Staff will talk with the cadet to determine the seriousness of their intentions. If the cadet only has suicidal thoughts but no specific plan, s/he may complete a [Safety Plan](#) with the first available staff member. If the cadet indicates that they have a plan, or the thoughts are persistent and disruptive, staff should place the cadet on a call with the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988**

**Suicidal Behaviors:** Gestures and actions that could lead to self injury or death, when accompanied by any statement (verbal or written) that communicates this intention, are an emergency. A cadet engaging in these actions must be immediately disrupted, using MAB-based verbal and physical interventions. The cadet should be transported to the emergency room at Barrett Hospital for crisis assessment. Immediately notify the cadet's parents/guardians and the Deputy Director of this transport.

Put out an all-MYCA communication to make sure the cadet is always under staff supervision. Unless the cadet has suicidal behavior, they should be integrated with their platoon at all times, and encouraged to connect with others.

**Self-Harm:** is a common behavior in the Academy's student population. It is typically a response to intense emotions such as shame or self-loathing. It is often used as a means to distract the cadet from the intense emotion, or to generate dissociative or euphoric reactions. It is not necessarily a sign of suicidal ideation, though self-harming individuals may also have suicidal thoughts or behaviors.

Cadre Instructors conduct nightly health and hygiene ("H & H") inspections. If cutting or other forms of self-harm have occurred, cadre will notify Med Tech and treat the injury if needed. Cadre will direct the cadet to fill out a self-harm assessment. Cadre can coach the cadet if time permits or direct the cadet to an available staff member that they feel comfortable to talk with. Self-harm assessment will be forwarded to the respective platoon academic counselor for follow up. The cadet's Academic Counselor will draw up a safety plan and forward to relevant staff.

**Other Mental Health Crises:** Due to internal or external stressors, cadets may experience other symptoms of psychological distress. Staff should model the normalcy of naming and feeling emotions, and encourage cadets to do the same. Sometimes cadets experience symptoms that are beyond our scope of training to manage. Examples include:

- Severe withdrawal- not eating, speaking, moving, etc;
- Inability to sleep;
- Erratic, pressured speech;
- Pacing, shouting, crying, or screaming with an inability to de-escalate;
- Expressing grandiose, bizarre, or delusional ideas or perceptions;

If the cadet cannot be calmed down over a long period of time, staff should communicate the situation to the parent/guardian and seek permission to have the cadet evaluated by a medical provider. If these symptoms are accompanied by unsafe behaviors, staff will use MAB-based interventions, and will take the cadet to Barrett Hospital, as described above.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# Communication

**Radio Procedures:** The ChalleNGe Academy staff stays in touch through radio communication. It is imperative that we are professional over the airwaves. Here are a few standard guidelines that will be followed:

- On the University of Montana Western campus, the main communication channel is Channel 1.
- In locations other than campus the main communication channel is Channel 2.
- Staff must not discuss personal issues of cadets or staff on the main channel.
- Keep transmissions to a minimum. If more than a few sentences go to channel 3.
- Speak clearly on the radio.
- Radio transmissions are for efficiency, not convenience.
- No staff will ever be without a radio.
- The following call signs and 10 codes have been assigned to be used by all ChalleNGe staff members. Use of these codes will reduce unnecessary radio traffic and provide for a more professional atmosphere. If you do not have a call sign, you will use your last name.
- Do NOT put information about Cadets out on CH 1 that you don't want every cadet to hear (i.e. Cadet Jones is NC). That traffic is to be sent to a specific person on the secure channel.

Call Signs are as follows: 10-Codes are as follows:

V-1: Director 10-1: Enroute

V-2: Deputy Director 10-2: Arrived 10-3: AWOL

V-4: Commandant 10-4: Roger

V-5: Operations Sergeant Major 10-14: Out of the Net

V-6: Team Leader/A- Team Leader 10-20: Location

V-7: 1ST Platoon Cadre 10-25: Go to secure channel #3

V-8: 2nd Platoon Cadre

V-9: 3rd Platoon Cadre

**\*\*The following color codes will be used to indicate situations of a more serious nature. If heard over the radio, all other traffic should cease unless it is critical in nature.**

**Code Red:** Situation in progress, immediate assistance is needed.

**Code Yellow:** Situation developing, request assistance. (Preventive in nature - at a minimum Cadre TL to respond)

**Code Blue:** Serious Medical Condition/Injury. Medical Personnel needed ASAP.

**Code Black:** Lock down, no one moves without permission.

**Crisis Communication Procedures:** In crisis situations, staff will clear the radio, and the Team Leader or their designee will direct communication related to resolving the situation. The Team Leader will also handle or delegate all necessary follow-up communication, including, but not limited to: parent/guardian contact, first responder coordination (police, fire, or ambulance), investigation of the incident if needed, and communication of critical facts to Academy leaders.

**The Commander's Critical Incident Report (CCIR):** is a reference for staff to use in consideration of the timing and content of communications with Academy leaders. In

everyday operations, leaders can be brief via email or text message so that they have the facts at hand as they prepare a response the next business day. In some cases, a response is required before the next business day and leaders must be called, regardless of the time of day.

**Serious Incident Reports (SIR):** National Guard Bureau requires that program directors submit reports of serious incidents, as well as the results of their investigation into such incidents. All off-site medical care, including non-emergent care, is required to be documented with an SIR. Other incidents that require SIR's include violations of the Hands Off Leadership policy, incidents of serious injury or death involving cadets or staff, behavioral escalation that constitutes a "riot" and requires law enforcement intervention, or other incidents that could lead to adverse press, to which state or federal leaders may need to respond. The Team Leader or their designee must gather all information reports, witness statements, and any other material related to such incidents. All incidents of suspected violations of this policy will be reported to the Deputy Director or Director, who will conduct an investigation of the incident and forward any findings to the National Guard Bureau, in accordance with the Academy's [Serious Incident Report SOP](#).

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### Cadet Supervision

**Responsibilities of All Staff:** Regardless of each staff member's position description, all staff are accountable to the Academy's mission to intervene in the lives of its students. Cadets are adolescents- this means they lack the impulse control, awareness of others, or general maturity that adults have developed. Therefore, they must be actively and constructively supervised by staff at all times. Supervision is not "babysitting." Staff who are supervising cadets are expected to actively control the activities at hand, maintain order and accountability, and interact with cadets. Far more skills are built through these deliberate practices than through passive overwatch. Additionally, the actively engaged cadet has less opportunity to make poor decisions or to get into conflict with other cadets.

**Non-Cadre Supervision Support During The Residential Phase:** The Academic Counseling, Admissions, Post-Residential, and Teaching Departments all contribute to the supervision of cadets in the early weeks of the Residential Phase. The terms and timeframe of this support may continue beyond the early weeks if cadet behavior or Cadre Department manning necessitates it. The plan, by week and department contribution, is detailed below:

**Acclimation:** Teachers and Admissions Counselors will take a total of 8 chase duty shifts. These shifts will run from 1200-2000, as in the past. Teachers will take TUE & WED nights of Week 1 and MON & TUES of Week 2. Admissions Counselors will take FRI & SAT nights of Week 1 and WED & THURS of Week 2. The Commandant and Deputy Commandant will spread their hours to bridge all seven days of the week. They will include themselves in the Cadre Manning chart as circumstances required. During Acclimation, they will prioritize direct candidate supervision and Cadre training and coaching above administrative duties.

**Weekend and Swing Hour Duties:** Starting the first weekend of Acclimation, Counselors and Case Managers will flex their schedules to include weekend and swing shift hours. On the

Wednesday before weekend duty days, those staff members will check in with the Academy Operations Manager about Cadre manning. If supervision appears to need more support on either Days or Swings, they will align their work hours to overlap most with the shift in need. The supporting staff member will check in with the TL/ATL at the start of these shifts to discuss supervision needs. They will not be placed in the Cadre Manning chart, nor will they be assigned a V7/8/9 slot. They will perform their own duties unless cadet behavioral crises occur that require their support. These shifts will count toward each staff member's 40 hour weekly work obligation; staff may trade out hours or days worked in this schedule for hours or days in their normal schedule. Teachers will rotate through swing shift duties on Wednesdays. They will check in with the TL/ATL at the start of these shifts to discuss supervision needs. They will not be placed in the Cadre Manning chart, nor will they be assigned a V7/8/9 slot. They will perform their own duties unless cadet behavioral crises occur that require their support. These shifts will count toward each staff member's 40 hour weekly work obligation; staff may trade out hours or days worked in this schedule for hours or days in their normal schedule.

**Evaluation:** At the Week 7 OMT meeting, The Director and the OMT will assess the need for ongoing non-cadre supervision support. If the class is behaviorally stable and/or the Cadre Department is staffed and performing well, the program ends at the start of Week 8. If the class is not stable and/or the Cadre Department has gaps, then staff in other departments will continue to flex their schedules as needed in order to support cadet safety and retention.

**Cadet Inspections for Hygiene, Safety, and Welfare:** Various circumstances require supervising staff to conduct inspections of cadets' gear, living quarters, belongings, and/or persons to validate their hygiene, safety, or welfare. The [Cadet Inspections SOP](#) details conditions and procedures. All staff will be trained in and familiar with this SOP.

In all cases, inspections will be conducted respectfully, in accordance with National Guard Bureau guidance and the Director's Intent.

## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **Managing Aggressive Behavior**

#### **Tools to Prevent and Intervene in Behavioral Crisis**

#### **Academy Objectives**

1. Identify the behavior levels that contribute to the development of a crisis and choose an appropriate staff intervention for each level.
2. Identify useful non-verbal techniques which can help to prevent acting out behavior.
3. Use verbal techniques to de-escalate behavior.
4. Demonstrate principles of personal safety to avoid injury if behavior escalates to a physical level.
5. Provide for the care, welfare, safety and security of all those who are involved in a crisis situation.

**Staff Guidelines:** The following are some guidelines for all staff to follow with regard to cadet interactions. These are designed to be a quick reference. Full training occurs annually

through the Managing Aggressive Behavior (MAB) framework.

## **DO**

**Manage your own emotions and behavior in healthy, appropriate, professional ways at all times:** Cadets rely on staff for a model of appropriate self-management and appropriate behavior. They will generally be reassured by your calm demeanor, and will gradually try to emulate you., your cadets will do their best to emulate you. Conversely, if you are escalated, defensive, or emotionally triggered, cadets will react negatively.

**Maintain your professionalism:** This is important because your professionalism reflects on you in all aspects of job performance and is what cadets use to “judge” the validity of the Academy. Keeping a professional attitude and demeanor at all times will help you to excel in most situations. Small gestures communicate your professionalism:

- a) Wear the correct uniform or standard of dress at all times;
- b) Engage with cadets appropriately- avoid either excessive familiarity or unnecessary harshness
- c) Avoid the appearance that you are “hanging out” with other staff, or are not paying attention to cadets;

**Remain calm and in control of yourself:** Staff are leaders, and the tone we set is eventually followed by cadets. Strive to remain in control of yourself and of what you say and do. If you find that you are struggling to maintain calm control, get another staff member to step into the situation and take a moment to regain your composure.

**Take charge of the situation:** As a staff member, you will be in control of any situation that occurs between the cadets. In order to be in control, you must take charge. Step in, gather information, and make a good, common sense decision. Many of the situations you will encounter will require nothing more than giving simple directions to the cadets. Other situations will require detailed attention and thought, gathering of information, making observations, collecting statements, or a variety of other things. The main point you must keep in mind, however, is that you are the person in charge. Be firm, fair, and professional.

**Separate the escalated cadet from the group:** This “do” applies mostly to the disruptive or disrespectful cadet when they are acting out negative attitudes, actions, or behaviors. You must try to separate the disruptive cadet from the remainder of the group. The group is the cadet’s audience and their source of energy. The cadet at times will not or cannot accept your authority in front of the other cadets. If you try to handle some disciplinary situations in front of their peers, you may find it very difficult. Many cadets cannot bear the thought of losing face in front of peers, they will continue to be disruptive and disrespectful as long as their audience can see them. Many cadets are very different when they are removed from their platoon. Once their attitude, actions, or behaviors are corrected the Cadet must rejoin the group and be required to act in a manner that is consistent with the goals of the ChalleNGe Academy.

**Use an appropriate tone of voice:** Note how it does not say use an “authoritative tone” of voice. You must use a tone of voice that is best suited to deal with each situation. Different situations require a different tone and volume. Yelling, screaming, or excessive tones, in all situations will not work. You must determine what will work the best in each situation by gathering information about the situation, making observations, and your knowledge about the cadet(s) involved.

**Remain aware of your safety and the safety of those around you:** Always be on the lookout for potential trouble situations. Many situations can develop into something where Cadets or staff can be hurt or injured. Be aware of those situations. If you find that you are unable to control the situation yourself, immediately call for assistance! Code “Yellow” for an escalating situation, Code “Red” for actual emergency. Ensure you state your location two times.

**Call for assistance if necessary:** Do not be afraid to get on the radio and call for assistance if you think the situation warrants. Do not think that you can handle every situation. One caution to remember: if you do call for help over the radio, be calm and clear and use the alternate channel unless it is an emergency. Do not broadcast to the core of cadets that you are having problems.

**Send the cadet to the appropriate staff member:** There will be instances when a cadet may approach you with a problem you are not trained to deal with. Refer the cadet to the appropriate department so they can receive the help or counseling that is required. Make sure you first check the availability of the staff member the cadet wants to see. If available, monitor the cadet’s travel from point A to point B.

**Explain yourself:** If you choose to discipline a cadet, ensure the cadet knows **why** they are being disciplined when it is happening. Give them the appropriate punishment, then when they have completed the punishment, discuss with them how they did not meet the standards required. Do not nag, or lecture. You must be able to read the body language of the cadet and act accordingly. The cadets should see a direct link between their actions and the punishment. In addition, it will require them to take responsibility for their actions. Always leave the cadet with some form of positive reinforcement. Sometimes a cadet may ask you a question when you are disciplining them. *It is important to see the distinction between an information seeking question and a challenging question.* The cadet may truly be looking for more information. He really may not see where they went wrong. Staff should certainly be able to support their actions. If a cadet has a question about discipline, answer the cadet. If you do not have an answer, you are probably in the wrong, admit it. Refer to the Verbal Escalation Continuum. The first stage is questioning. If it is an information-seeking question, answer the question. Do not become a precipitating factor yourself.

**Complete Postvention Conversations:** After de-escalation, the individuals involved in the crisis, including staff responders, bystanders, and the escalated cadets themselves, need to debrief. This process, which is detailed in MAB training, re-establishes rapport and appropriate standards of conduct. It offers the escalated individual a safe way to take accountability for their actions and gain insight into negative patterns of behavior. The [Crisis Incident Postvention Form](#) prompts staff to document and reflect on their responses in preparation for the postvention conversation. *Staff are required to complete this form if they have used physical interventions, whether or not those interventions were correct according to MAB guidelines.*

## **DON’T**

**Lose your cool:** It is extremely important in every situation to remain calm and in control of your actions. This does not necessarily mean that you should never speak in an authoritative tone to a cadet, but you must remain calm on the inside. At times, you will feel a high level of frustration with certain cadets. This is especially true when a problem has escalated for no apparent reason. During these times it is important that you continue to treat the other cadets

fairly, without regard to your level of frustration with particular individuals. Be aware of both your verbal and non-verbal (body language) actions when your emotions begin to escalate.

***Cadets will recognize it if you lose your composure, consequently, this will diminish your “expert power” over the cadets.*** Remain calm and be professional at all times.

**Engage in power struggles:** The easiest way to let the cadet take control of a situation is to get into an argument with him/her. If you do this, you have become reactive, and the cadet will keep you dancing to his/her tune until you stop arguing with him/her.

**Appear uncertain or timid:** Moments of uncertainty occur, especially when staff are newer to the Academy or when a cadet is behaving in ways that are unusual. It is okay to tell a cadet that you will take time to think before making a decision. It is possible to do this without losing control of the situation. If you do not take control and be decisive, the cadets will take this as a sign of weakness, and may try to actually bully you. Someone is always in charge of any situation, ensure we as staff are always the ones in charge. Try to appear confident, even if you are not sure of the situation. Do not say or do things that you don't know about. Use tactful ways to get information from your supervisor without looking like you don't know what you are doing. Knowledge is power. If you know the rules of the Academy, you won't internally question yourself, and will seem more confident to the cadets.

**Project a callous or uncaring attitude:** If the cadets sense that you care for them, they will do almost anything for you. Many times a cadet will approach you with a problem that you think is trivial, but to the cadet it may be the most important thing in his/her life. If a cadet tells you of a problem he or she is having, do not say anything or use body language that gives the idea that you do not care. If you show them an uncaring attitude, you will not be able to build the rapport with the cadets that you will need to more effectively do your job.

a) Negative statements help no one!

b) Front line compassion by Staff is critical to the success of the cadets.

**Let the cadet take advantage of you:** The reverse of an uncaring attitude is becoming personally involved with the cadets. This will ultimately lead to your inability to remain objective, and will certainly lead to them taking advantage of you, or another cadet taking advantage of you. One of the key things to remember is to keep track of how many times a cadet desires to see the counselor or wants to go on sick call. Many times he or she will try to use these excuses to get away from you or the company while having no legitimate reason to be there. Also watch for cadets not in your platoon wanting to see you about personal problems or personal favors. This can take away from your time with your own platoon. a) Do not play favorites!

b) Treat all cadets firm, fair, and consistent.

c) Maintain professionalism throughout the Academy.

**Jump into a situation being handled by another staff member:** Many times staff sees another staff member having a problem with a cadet, and they want to jump right into the fray. This is not a good idea. If you jump in without the facts you may cause more problems. Many times you do not know the circumstances surrounding the incident and you may not know the cadet involved. Before jumping in make sure to get information about the situation so you can make the right decision. Also, if you jump into a situation without being asked you have done two negative things: first, you are being disrespectful of the staff handling the situation. Second, and more importantly, you have stripped all the credibility away from the staff handling the situation

because the cadet may feel that the staff member cannot handle the problem by him/herself. Be patient, listen to what is being said. Only intervene after first checking with the staff involved or if the safety of staff or the student is in question.

**Become rigid about being “right”:** Your job as a staff member in escalated situations is to reestablish safety and calm. Cadets may have many ideas about the cause of a situation. In the moment, these ideas are not your concern. You are not the judge, jury, or executioner. Gather information reports and write your own postvention reflection. Impartial staff will handle the investigation and address disciplinary outcomes if necessary.

**Specific Crisis Incident Procedures:** Some extremely escalated behaviors, such as repeated aggression, unprovoked assault, or running away from the facility, require additional responses from staff.

**Aggression:** Assault on other cadets that is premeditated, unprovoked, repeating, or extreme may require law enforcement intervention. Consult the CCIR for details.

**Missing Cadet (a.k.a. “AWOL”) Procedures:** The following are the procedures in the event a cadet(s) are believed to be absent without permission, or “AWOL” in military terms. It is imperative that we, as staff, have positive control of the cadet’s personal and ChalleNGe gear. **When Cadet Leaves CI Control**

1. Team Leader will immediately assign staff to go on search, making every effort to maintain eyes on the cadet from the moment they leave CI control. The TL will be responsible to update this assignment, and reassign search/chase to new individuals as manning allows, until the cadet is located and retrieved.
2. Full accountability will be conducted.
3. Team Leader notifies the Commandant. Consult current CCIR guidance to determine if circumstances (i.e. emotional disturbance, severe weather, or duration of absence) warrant additional contact up the Chain of Command.
4. If the cadet is gone for 30 minutes, the TL notifies the cadet’s parents/guardians. 5. If the cadet is gone for 60 minutes, TL notifies Dillon Police Department as a courtesy with the number of cadets and time AWOL. However, if the cadet going AWOL is in an emergency situation due to weather, suicidal ideation, etc., promptly notify DPD with a request for officer assistance.
6. Make appropriate log entries indicating that the above contacts have been established. 7. It is important to know that AWOL and a missing person are two separate things and will be treated differently by ChalleNGe staff and local authorities.

#### **When a Cadet Returns**

1. UA will be performed the next day at 11:00. However, if the cadet is visibly under the effects of drugs or alcohol the DD will be contacted immediately.
2. The TL will contact parents/guardians regardless of time to notify them of their child’s return, and will record the communication in the Log Book.
3. Contact Police and give a situation report (SITREP) if other cadets are still out. (i.e. number still out etc.)
4. If the cadet was considered a missing person, the Team Leader will need to close out paperwork in person at the Sheriff’s office.

#### **If a Cadet Does Not Return**

1. After 12 hours, CI's, under Team Leader orders, pack up cadet's gear. A garbage bag will be used to pack cadet's personal gear in, to include all items kept in the personal storage bin.
2. At the 24 hour mark, the TL will file a missing person report with the Dillon Police Department.
3. All ChalleNGe property is put into the issued laundry bag, linen is collected and all ChalleNGe gear is taken to the Supply office during duty hours and the Team Leader office during non-duty hours. The Team Leader, at the earliest possible time, will ensure that the gear is taken to the supply office.
4. Cadet's personal gear will be boxed up and given to the Admin Department so it can be shipped to the cadet's home. Admin will send it C.O.D.
5. Once a determination is made that the cadet is NOT returning to ChalleNGe, the Deputy Director will notify staff via email of the cadet's status change, and will direct relevant staff to update the status in our Student Information System.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### Our Workplace

#### **Equal Employment Opportunity, Non-discrimination, and**

**Harassment Prevention Policy for DMA Employees:** The Department of Military Affairs and Montana Youth ChalleNGe Academy do not tolerate discrimination or harassment based on an individual's race, color, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, religion, creed, sex, pregnancy status, childbirth or a medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, political beliefs, genetic information, military service or veteran's status, culture, social origin or condition, or ancestry. Likewise, we do not tolerate discrimination or harassment because of a person's marriage to or association with individuals in one of the previously mentioned protected classes. MYCA is committed to resolving discrimination and harassment complaints in a fair and timely manner.

Any suspected event of discrimination or harassment must be immediately reported to the Director, or to the Human Resources Officer at the Department of Military Affairs. No staff at MYCA are authorized to investigate or determine the nature of an event that an employee claims to be discrimination or harassment. However, all employees are responsible to maintain a professional and respectful demeanor that maintains a positive, harassment-free work environment.

DMA's policies and procedures regarding these issues continue to evolve. Please visit this link for the most up-to-date versions: <http://montanadma.org/policies-and-procedures>

**Educational Opportunity:** Accordingly, Montana Youth ChalleNGe Academy shall provide equal educational opportunity and treatment for all students without regard to any identity or status as listed above.

All staff shall encourage students to explore and develop their individual interests in career and vocational technical programs and employment opportunities without regard to sex including reasonable efforts encouraging students to consider and explore "non-traditional" occupations for men and women.

Equal opportunity and treatment shall be afforded to all students who desire to participate in extracurricular activities and programs (MCA 49-2-307, 49-3-205)

Students or employees with questions or complaints concerning the provisions of Title IX (Sex Discrimination in Education or Section 504, Accessibility for the Handicapped) may contact the Montana Youth Challenge Academy Title IX Coordinator, Deputy Director Melissa Robbins, 790 E. Cornell Street, Dillon, MT 59725 (406) 558-4412.

**Reporting Procedures for Sexual Harassment or Assault:** MYCA has strict policies on the conduct of cadets and staff. MYCA Policy Letter #1 and MYCA Policy Letter#11 clearly defines the Rule of Three and fraternization. Staff and students will follow these policy letters to ensure a safe and professional environment.

1. MYCA has a zero tolerance for sexual harassment or assault and will diligently investigate all accusations of sexual harassment or assault; forwarding necessary information to the proper authorities.
2. MYCA is a mandatory reporter for any sexual assault and will follow State of Montana rules for reporting. Any staff member who becomes aware of an actual or imminent sexual assault must immediately report this to their supervisor. This is listed on the CCIR list and phone calls will be made to the Deputy Director and or Director until one of them is reached and notified of the situation.
3. If a cadet or staff member feels they have been sexually harassed or assaulted they should immediately go to the nearest staff member and report the incident. If the individual reporting feels uncomfortable reporting to the nearest staff member they should seek out a staff member they trust as soon as possible. The seriousness of these types of incidents warrant jumping the Chain of Command.
4. Sexual harassment or assault are predatory actions and need to be dealt with as soon as possible. Reporting your concerns are necessary to assist MYCA in maintaining a safe environment for all.
5. The sexual assault/harassment advocates for cadets and staff are:  
**Commandant Weldon**  
**Platoon Academic Counselor**  
**Deputy Director Pittman**

\*\*\*These individuals, or any staff member, may be approached at any time concerning sexual harassment or assault.

**Workplace Wellness:** All employees have the right to a safe work environment, and to the maintenance of their general health and wellbeing while employed. At MYCA, it is especially important for staff to attend to these issues because of the inherently stressful nature of our work.

**Tobacco & Vape-Free Campus:** To support employee health, and to comply with the tobacco & vape-free policy of the UMW campus, all MYCA employees will refrain from using any tobacco

(smoked or smokeless), or any vape devices, while on the premises. Employees who use tobacco or other forms of nicotine are authorized to use nicotine replacement products such as nicotine patches, gum, or “Zyn” pouches. However such products must be secured, and must be undetectable to cadets at all times. Employees whose nicotine use is apparent to cadets or staff may be subject to disciplinary action.

**Exercise:** Employees are encouraged to use the weight room on campus (when not occupied by sports teams or our cadets), or to otherwise incorporate at least three hours of moderately strenuous physical activity into their week. Employees can communicate with direct supervisors about how to achieve this.

**Employee Assistance Program:** The State of Montana offers its employees a range of services through its EAP, including individual and family counseling, addiction recovery services, and legal advice to name a few. Emotional as well as physical health is essential in our workplace.

## Appendices

- A. [MYCA Policy Letter #001 Rule of Three](#)
- B. [MYCA Policy Letter # 004 Hands Off Leadership](#)
- C. [Cadet Retention and Re-engagement SOP](#)
- D. [Cadet Inspections for Hygiene, Safety, and Welfare SOP](#)
- E. [Serious Incident Report and Commander’s Critical Incident Report SOP](#)
- F. [CCIR Quick Reference](#)
- G. [Crisis Postvention Form](#)