STUDENT HANDBOOK













YOUR LEARNING JOURNEY AT COS BEGINS NOW.

READ THIS PACKET IN ITS ENTIRETY. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR FOLLOWING ALL INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN IN THIS PACKET.

WELCOME CLASS OF 2026

Congratulations on your selection to Cadet Officer School (COS), Civil Air Patrol's most advanced leadership development program for cadet officers. Your selection reflects not only past performance, but our confidence in your ability to operate in a demanding, professional environment alongside other high-performing cadets from across the country.

COS is conducted at the U.S. Air Force's Center of Learning and is modeled after professional officer education. COS is not an encampment, a box to check, or a lecture series. It is intentionally rigorous, discussion-driven, and designed to challenge how you think, communicate, and lead, particularly when you are no longer the most senior person in the room.



As a student, you are expected to arrive prepared to take ownership of your conduct, time management, and performance. You will be treated as a cadet officer, not an airman. Professionalism, accountability, and attention to detail are expected at all times, both inside and outside the classroom.

Much of the learning at COS will focus on indirect leadership, including leading through influence, judgment, and credibility rather than positional authority. You will be challenged to engage thoughtfully in a peer environment where leadership is shared and situational. The COS motto, *Ancora Imparo,* meaning "I am still learning," reflects this mindset and reinforces that leadership development is a lifelong process.

This Student Handbook provides a clear understanding of how COS operates and what is expected of you as a participant. Read it carefully. Cadets who succeed at COS prepare deliberately and act with intention. A separate curricula guide, including pre-arrival readings and required essay, will be published later in the Spring.

COS is demanding by design, but it is also an opportunity. The goal is not perfection. It is readiness for increased responsibility within CAP and beyond. Come prepared, stay curious, and take full ownership of the experience ahead of you!

Kathleen P. Crockett

KATHLEEN P. CROCKETT, Lt Col, CAP
CAP Activity Director

Jason W. Steed

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GOOGLE CLASSROOM

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Travel, Arrival & Departure Instructions

Key Dates & Pre-Arrival Checklist

14 March	Accept or decline your COS slot via email
30 March	Join the 2026 COS Student Google Classroom
15 April	Late fee (extra $100) applied if tuition not paid in full yet
23 April	If full payment not received, you may be un-slotted
30 June	If 18+ ensure Cadet Protection Training is current Submit required Travel Info Updates made to CAPHEALTH
8 July	Project X Release submitted
In-Processing	Writing Assignment #1 Due

*****THIS LIST IS NOT ALL INCLUSIVE. There will be a few additional tasks loaded into the Google Classroom through the Spring and early summer*****

Slotting Acceptance

To ACCEPT your slot: email cadetofficerschool@gmail.com to confirm you accept your slot by ***14 March***

To DECLINE your slot: go to Registration Zone and cancel your application for COS and email us to notify us at cadetofficerschool@gmail.com by ***14 March***

If, after reviewing the materials, you determine that this activity is not the right fit for you, that is completely acceptable. We simply ask that you notify us promptly and formally decline your slot so it may be offered to another qualified cadet on the alternate list. If we do not receive confirmation of acceptance or declination ***by 14 March, we will assume you are declining your slot and will release it accordingly.***

Scholarship Recipients

If you were a Lift/Top financial assistance recipient OR Activity Scholarship recipient, you will have already been notified via email and your relevant tuition payment will have been entered in Registration Zone at the time you were slotted. Please check your activity card in Registration Zone to see if you have any balance due.

Payment Information

Your activity fee will cover your lodging, meals, and course materials. Unfortunately, we are not able to provide a transportation reimbursement this year.

To pay: go to eServices > Registration Zone > Manage Payments to find your invoice for the COS activity fee. You must pay online in Registration Zone using Paypal or a credit card. If you haven't paid your tuition by April 22, NHQ will unslot you on April 23 and you will be at the bottom of the alternate list.

Due to the complex nature of National Cadet Special Activities, no refunds are available after April 30.

Pre-COS Communication Policy

In the months prior to COS, the activity staff put in countless hours of preparation to ensure the best experience for the Cadets. In order to do this, information will need to be collected from students from time to time. Whenever a request is made of students, it will be emailed to their email on file and posted in the Google Classroom with a clear suspense. If the suspense is missed, without prior-warning to the COS staff, a follow-up email will be sent to the cadet and their respective squadron leadership and Wing DCP. If a third attempt to communicate with a cadet is unsuccessful, the cadet is in jeopardy of losing their activity slot at the discretion of the Activity Director.

Activity Director Contact Information

cadetofficerschool@gmail.com is the main point of contact for questions leading up to COS. Only the Directors have access to the account and will respond to emails.

If there is any issue which you would like to discuss with us (i.e. medical considerations or travel plans), please send an email. We will respond typically within 48 hours. If the question requires it, we will set up a group call between a member of the leadership team, the relevant Chaplain and/or Health Services Officer, the cadet, and their parent/guardian as desired, to discuss the best way to meet the needs of each individual cadet.

If you cannot feel your issue cannot be addressed via the school email or is of utmost urgency, contact the CAP Activity Director, Lt Col Kathleen Crockett, directly at kcrockett@cap.gov or 240-285-1047.

Travel Planning

Maxwell AFB is in the Central Time Zone

ARRIVAL AT MAXWELL AFB: on Saturday, ***18 July 2026 between 1000-2200***. If you cannot arrive between the in-processing hours, please email us as soon as possible - we cannot promise to accommodate arrivals outside this window.

GRADUATION CEREMONY: The 28 July Ceremony is not an open event. However, we will live-stream these events on the Cadet Officer School Facebook page for family/friends/mentors to participate virtually.

DEPARTURE FROM MAXWELL AFB: on Wednesday ***29 July 2026 before 1200***. Early departure is not recommended as many of the requirements for graduation take place in the last 48 hours of the activity and you cannot leave late as all COS facilities must be returned to USAF at noon. Cadets with airline departures after 1400, out of either airport, should plan to wait at the airport. Drivers or bus riders who must depart outside the allotted times, need to coordinate with COS staff as soon as possible.

TRAVEL OPTIONS:

There are several methods of getting to and departing from Cadet Officer School.

1. **Commercial Airline**
    a. Fly directly into Montgomery Regional Airport (MGM) – COS will provide pick-up/drop-off services to this airport.
    b. Fly into Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) and secure own transportation to/from our staging area (Maxwell AFB Visitors Center, Bldg. 502, Maxwell AFB, AL 36112).
        i. Our recommended (used in 2023 & 2024 for all cadets) option is Groome Transportation to Maxwell AFB. COS will meet cadets directly at the Groome stop.
2. **Bus** - Use Montgomery, AL as your destination. COS will provide pick-up/drop-off services only from this station. If you opt for other stations, you must secure your own transportation to the Maxwell AFB Visitors Center.
3. **Driving**
    a. **Self-Driving –** Report directly to in-processing. Cadets are not permitted to use their vehicles during COS.
    b. **Drop-off –** Report to Maxwell AFB Visitors Center (Bldg. 502, Maxwell AFB, AL 36112). If the non-student driver desires to actually drive on base to see the COS facilities, this must be pre-coordinated with the COS Staff.

Reporting Instructions



Cadets will report to Building 1408 on Maxwell AFB for In-Processing. The doors are marked with the blue arrows in the bottom picture.

Google Maps: "Bldg 1408 Maxwell AFB" can be found specifically
Other Maps: "Squadron Officer School"
(125 Chennault Cir, Maxwell AFB, AL) across the street

Cadets WILL NOT check-in at the front desk of the hotel and will receive their hotel room key from the COS staff.

COS will send out more specific directions for all cadets based on their travel method a few days prior to the travel days. If you have questions, please reach out to the COS team.

Drivers:

1. If you are being **dropped off** and your driver is not on the gate list and therefore not able to get on base – pull into the Visitor's Center and contact the COS team to report that you have arrived. A CAP person will meet you at the gate to escort you on.

2. If you are **driving yourself**, you will be on the list at the gate. Have your CAPID and Driver's License ready to show so the gate guard can match to the list. (If you have a military dependent ID, you may not be on the list.) Park in the far row in the blue rectangle. You will turn in your keys at in-processing.

Travel Plans will be submitted via the Google Classroom NLT 30 June. If you have any questions while planning your travel reach out to the COS email address.

Regardless, of your method of travel, please make every effort to either be at in-processing between 1000 and 2200. **Contact the COS team if you have any issues while traveling!**



Packing List

Note: Laundry is freely accessible, so you decide the quantities of items you need for the activity

REQUIRED

- ❑ Laptop computer, or tablet (iPad or Android) – if you already own one.
  - ⇒ COS ***does not*** require that you purchase a computer for COS! If you can't bring one, let COS staff know ***in advance*** as all the course is fully based in Google classroom and we can provide one to you to borrow.

- ❑ CAPID – Hand carry with you

- ❑ Government-issued photo ID (Driver's License, Passport, Dependent military ID, etc.) – whichever you reported to us you'd be using
  - ⇒ Ensure your ID is REALID compliant or a DoD Dependent ID
  - ⇒ Contact your state's driver's license department ASAP if you do not have a federal or state-issued ID to secure one in time

- ❑ Sleeping Attire

- ❑ ABUs or OCPs (must be entirely complete sets)
  - ⇒ Will be worn on approximately six days

Packing Hint:
Blues will be worn on Dav One!

- ❑ AF-style Short-Sleeved Blues uniform
  - ⇒ Will be worn only two days
  - ⇒ Flight caps only – "wheel" covers are not authorized
  - ⇒ No ribbons, cords, tie/tie tabs will be worn (badges are allowed)

- ❑ Hygiene Items – shampoo, deodorant, toothbrush/paste, razor/shaving cream, etc.

- ❑ Backpack/Computer Bag etc. – ensure it is CAPR 39-1 compliant

- ❑ Personal funds – *consider travel related delays, travel day food, Groome Shuttle driver tips, baggage fees, gift shops etc. All required expenses will be covered during the activity*

- ❑ Civilian clothes – conservative in nature, casual wear
  - ⇒ Minimal amount need as only evening study time will be conducted in civilian clothes
  - ⇒ For the Field Trip, you will wear civilian bottoms with COS T-Shirt so at least one pair of bottoms (no spandex, or ripped fabrics) to wear for that outdoor, off-base activity

REQUIRED – For daily volleyball games

- ❑ Navy or Black PT shorts with at least a 4" inseam uniform
  - ⇒ Spandex can be worn under shorts but not *as* shorts
- ❑ CAP or solid color T-Shirts or athletic shirts (no tank tops)
- ❑ Set of kneepads for volleyball
- ❑ Athletic Socks
- ❑ Set of kneepads
- ❑ Set of eyeglass straps if glasses (including sunglasses) are worn

Optional / Recommended Items

- ❑ Personal Journal
  - ⇒ Daily required journaling is done in whatever manner you would like (written or digital) – we will have composition notebooks available, but you may have a different method/style/book that you prefer
- ❑ Refillable Water bottle – *we will provide one per cadet as well*
- ❑ Poncho/Umbrella – CAPR 39-1 compliant
- ❑ Uniform maintenance accessories (sewing kit, starch, shoe-shine kit, etc.)
  - ⇒ The hotel rooms come with an iron and ironing board
- ❑ Sunscreen & bug repellent

Lodging Arrangements

You will be staying at the base hotel on Maxwell AFB. You do not need to make your own reservation as it is included with your tuition. All of the rooms are single occupancy and have a private bathroom. There are laundry facilities in the building, and the COS staff will provide your laundry detergent. You will not be able to charge incidentals to the room. **You do not need to bring your own bed linens or towels.**

Health, Support & Accommodations

COS is an intensive 10-day course that mandates academic and physical participation and can create stressful, but controlled, environments. A medical officer and chaplain will be present to support as needed. For cadets to perform at their best, we encourage advance notice of any medical, academic, or other necessary considerations. ***We can't help if we don't know!***

Educational/Language Considerations

If English is not your first language or you have any documented educational support plans (an IEP) please notify email us so we can adequately prepare to support your academic success at COS.

Medical Considerations

If you have, or develop before arriving at Maxwell AFB, any medical conditions that might affect your ability to successfully completing the full activity (examples: physical limitations due to current treatment for broken bones or sprains, frequent headaches, regular nose bleeds, seizures, severe allergies, needing crutches /wheelchair, etc.) please notify the COS email so we can adequately prepare to meet the need. Failure to disclose required medical information may result in dismissal for integrity concerns, as it places staff at risk. Cadets who decline provided medical accommodations in advance and are unable to fully participate may also be dismissed. ***Note: Maxwell AFB is a federal military facility and does not permit federally illegal substances, including medical marijuana or other cannabis products.***

Religious/Cultural Considerations

COS emphasizes the importance of leadership in fostering a professional and respectful environment. If you have cultural or religious practices you with to observe during the course, please inform us in advance and we will work with you, provided they do not significantly conflict with the curriculum.

Dietary Considerations

The majority of meals will take place in the Maxwell AFB Dining Hall. Each meal will have options in the cafeteria that meet **common dietary needs, including vegetarian options**. However, there will be some catered meals so you must notify us so we can plan for those. Please let us know what specific dietary observances you maintain at home so we can support you here. In the past CAP has supported pre-arranged gluten-free, lactose-free, allergies, diabetes, vegan, kosher, halal and vegetarian meals. There is also the option to bring your own food if you are more comfortable controlling your dietary options.

Medication Management Guidelines for Cadets

In accordance with Civil Air Patrol Regulation CAPR 60-2, all cadets (regardless of age) participating in overnight activities—such as Cadet Officer School (COS), must follow standardized procedures for managing medications. These procedures promote safety, consistency, and accountability throughout the course. For any questions about medication management at COS, contact cadetofficerschool@gmail.com.

Cadets are expected to follow the guidance below to ensure personal well-being and success:

Bring Medications in Original Packaging

All prescription and non-prescription medications, herbals, vitamins, and supplements must be brought in their original containers (either pharmacy-labeled or store-packaged). This ensures proper identification and safe handling by COS staff.

Pack Enough Medication

Cadets must bring enough medication to cover the entire activity, including travel days. A buffer of two additional days' supply is recommended in case of delays or unexpected needs.

You'll Keep Rescue & Hormonal Medications with You

Rescue medications (e.g., inhalers, EpiPens) and hormonal medications (e.g., insulin, birth control) must remain with the cadet at all times for personal or emergency use. These medications should be clearly labeled and easily accessible. Cadets must ensure their Flight Instructors or a flight mate know the location of any rescue medication in case assistance is required.

Self-Administration Under Supervision

Cadets are responsible for self-administering their medications as prescribed. Administration will occur under the observation of the Health Services Officer (HSO) or a Flight Instructor. Staff may assist in accessing the correct dose but will not directly administer medications. Cadets who are not yet capable of independently managing their medication regimen should postpone participation in COS until they can do so responsibly.

Starting or Changing Medications? Plan Ahead

If it is necessary for you to start or change a prescription, within two weeks of COS notify us in advance and flag it to staff at check-in. Side effects can take up to two weeks to manifest so we want to avoid that during COS if at all possible.

Life at Cadet Officer School

Being on Maxwell AFB

COS operates on an active U.S. military installation shared with active-duty Airmen, Guardians, civilian employees, and visiting international military personnel. Cadets are guests on this installation and are expected to conduct themselves professionally in all public and shared spaces at all times.

Public spaces include—but are not limited to—hallways, lodging common areas, sidewalks, parking areas, dining facilities, transportation staging points, and any location outside assigned classrooms or seminar rooms. Cadets will remain aware of their surroundings, move with purpose, and avoid behavior that draws unnecessary attention to themselves or the COS program.

Professional conduct includes **appropriate language, controlled noise levels, respectful interactions with base personnel, and adherence to posted signs and instructions**. Horseplay, disruptive behavior, public displays of unprofessionalism, or treating the installation as a recreational space are inconsistent with COS expectations.

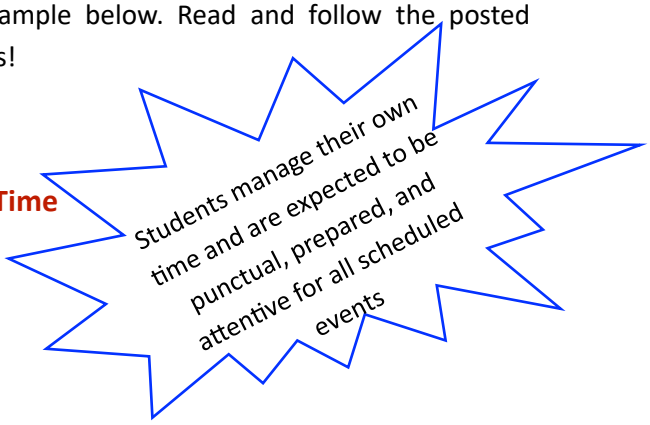
Uniform standards, grooming standards, and the 3-man wingman system apply in all public spaces unless specifically directed otherwise. Cadets are expected to model maturity and good judgment even when not directly supervised by a staff member. Please ensure that you meet grooming standards per CAPR 39-1 prior to arriving at your activity. Failure to meet grooming standards will result in your being sent home at your own expense. Activity staff do not have waiver authority.

Failure to meet these expectations reflects directly on COS and may result in corrective feedback, counseling, or disciplinary action.

Typical Daily Schedule

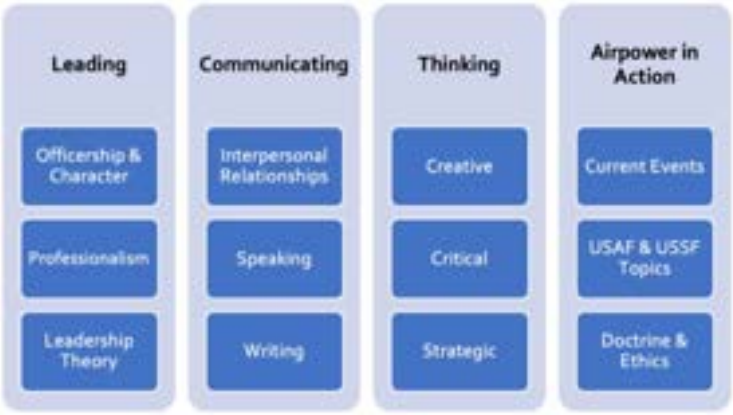
A typical daily schedule *could* resemble the following example below. Read and follow the posted schedules and be alert of any administrative announcements!

morning until 0800	Breakfast/Personal Time
0800 – 0830	Flight Administrative/Seminar Time
0830 – 1130	Course Content
1130 – 1300	Lunch/Personal Time
1300 – 1530	Course Content
1530 – 1700	Flight Seminar
1700 – 1830	Dinner/Change clothes
1830 – 1945	Volleyball
1945 – 2200	Study/Preparation for next day/Personal Time
2200	Curfew



Curricula Overview

The COS curriculum is organized into four main categories of instruction – similar to Region Cadet Leadership School but with additional courses and requirements. The blocks of instruction mirror those of the USAF Squadron Officer School and the Air Force's Leadership Development Course.



Instruction is presented through a variety of methods, including Briefings, guided seminar discussions and practical exercises (team leadership problems and case studies). The teaching methodology will vary with subject matter, but seminar/small-group discussions will be the primary method of instruction.

Google Classroom

COS uses Google Classroom as the official learning management platform for information, assignments, pre-readings, and announcements. Cadets are required to join the classroom with 15 days of accepting their slot and paying their activity fee.

Join the 2026 COS Student Classroom by clicking the hyperlink or using the code: **jgwwlmc2**. ***If you log in using a CAP domain email (cap.gov, XXwg.cap.gov, etc.) it may not work*** – try using a non-CAP email address. If still have problems, email us at cadetofficerschool@gmail.com ASAP.

Once enrolled, cadets are expected to monitor the Classroom regularly, complete all assignments and requirements by the posted deadlines, and track suspenses independently without reminders. Failure to join, monitor, and respond to posted materials may result in contact with your leadership chain and continued noncompliance may result in forfeiture of your COS slot.

Graduation Requirements

To receive COS NCSA credit, you must meet the spirit and intent of COS: ***be a team player, grasp the curriculum, apply the lessons learned, and exhibit professionalism*** as a CAP Cadet Officer. Failing to meet critical requirements of the COS curriculum, participating in less than 80% of the course activities, or having other disciplinary issues may result in completion of COS without earning NCSA credit or even early dismissal without credit and at your own expense. The Activity Directors are the final authority on all matters relating to graduation requirements.

Social Media Links

COS will have a full time Public Affairs Officer, but students are allowed to take personal photos and videos during the course. Specific personal device guidelines/restrictions will be provided on Day 1. Click the icons here for the respective links to our social media pages.

#CAPCOS26

Official Photo Library

Your Responsibilities as a COS Student

Cadet Officer School expects cadets to operate with a high level of independence. You are responsible for managing your obligations, tracking requirements, and meeting all suspenses without prompting. COS evaluates not only what you know, but how reliably you manage responsibility in a demanding environment.

These responsibilities include:

- Monitoring official COS communication platforms and acting on information posted there
- Completing required pre-arrival tasks, readings, and assignments on time
- Being prepared to contribute meaningfully to seminars and written work
- Managing your personal needs, health requirements, and uniform standards independently
- Maintaining professional conduct and sound judgment throughout the activity

Standards, Integrity & Dismissal Policies

COS holds cadets to professional standards of integrity and accountability. These standards apply continuously. More specific details on expectations will be briefed on Day 1 of COS.

Dismissal may occur (but is not limited to) for:

- Integrity violations, including failure to disclose necessary information prior to COS start
- Failure to meet participation or performance minimums
- Noncompliance with published instructions or deadlines
- Conduct that undermines the safety, professionalism, or learning environment

Dismissal decisions are made deliberately and in coordination with appropriate leadership, at the Activity Director's discretion. Cadets who violate any school rules (Personal integrity, Lights out, off limits, areas, fraternization, safety, academic, non-participation, etc.) or exhibit a general lack of professionalism will be sent home at their or their parents own expense. COS is not obligated to retain cadets who cannot meet its standards, and dismissed cadets may not receive NCSA/RCLS credit.