



Support and Supervision Policy

**For Designated Safeguarding Leads
and Deputy Designated Safeguarding
Leads
in Schools and Colleges**

September 2023

This policy sets out arrangements for support and supervision of staff who work with vulnerable children in schools.

This policy should be read alongside the separate “Practice Guidance”.

CONTEXT

“Working Together to Safeguard Children” (July,2018) states agencies “should have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting welfare”. One of the arrangements outlined is “appropriate supervision and support for staff”.

“Keeping Children Safe in Education” (2023, Part 2) states “Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure an appropriate **senior member** of staff, from the school or college **leadership team**, is appointed to the role of designated safeguarding lead. The designated safeguarding lead should take **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). This should be explicit in the role-holder’s job description”.

Annex C highlights that “During term time, the designated safeguarding lead and/or deputy should always be available (during school or college hours) for staff in the school or college to discuss any safeguarding concerns” and “the designated safeguarding lead is expected to act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff”.

PURPOSE

It is widespread practice in statutory agencies to provide supervision for staff responsible for child protection practice. This is seen as an effective means of ensuring compliance with procedures, providing support, and identifying professional development needs.

The definition of supervision that is often used for school settings and which has been adapted from the work of Morrison (2005) states that:

Supervision is a process by which one member of staff is given responsibility by the school to work with another staff member in order to meet certain organisational, professional and personal objectives, which together promote the best outcomes for students. These objectives and functions are:

1. Competent accountable performance (managerial function)
2. Continuing professional development (developmental/formative function)
3. Personal support (supportive/restorative function)
4. Engaging the staff member with the school (mediation function)

It is the role of the school’s governing body to ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead and any Deputies have appropriate support and supervision.

The Purpose of Safeguarding Supervision is to:

- Provide protected time to reflect on practice
- Provide support with emotional well-being, resilience, picking and developing coping strategies

- Have an opportunity to off-load, talk about how they are feeling when dealing with distressed children and young people and the impact on their own life. It should feel restorative and help build resilience
- Celebrate success
- Review workloads and time management
- Discuss and seek guidance on specific children/young people – review action plans, avoid drift. Provide a fresh eye, talk through intolerances, frustrations e.g. with other agencies/systems
- Provide an opportunity where a member of staff can be challenged supportively and constructively with advice offered on areas for improvement
- Allow for issues relating to the workplace and to working practices to be identified and discussed including safer working practice and professional boundaries
- Enable an opportunity for reflection, creative thinking and solution focussed thinking
- Consider how their role fits with the rest of the school/other services and the community
- Identify achievements and good practice
- Consider appropriate CPD/training needs in relation to the safeguarding role

There will be a number of possible models for delivering supervision involving one to one meetings and peer meetings both within the school and with other agencies. (See separate Practice Guidance for further details).

BENEFITS OF SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

Research shows that there are benefits to both staff and children when a system for support and supervision is in place.

Benefits to all staff

Schools have a duty of care towards their members of staff in relation to their physical and emotional well-being. Any member of staff could potentially deal with a child protection concern and the nature of the concern might be upsetting or distressing to that member of staff. Additionally, the requirement of confidentiality within child protection could lead to a staff member feeling isolated. Dealing with a child protection issue could, therefore, have an adverse impact on any staff member, not just the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Offering support and supervision following a child protection concern coming to light may reduce some of the impacts highlighted above leading to increased staff well-being; this will in turn have a beneficial effect on the rest of the school community.

Benefits to the DSL/Deputy DSL

In a study carried out by Barnardos' Scotland, ("Supervision in Education – Healthier Schools for All", Barnardo's, 2020) respondents (safeguarding practitioners in schools) highlighted that good Supervision helped them to feel appreciated, supported, valued, reassured and validated and they appreciated the opportunity to talk openly and honestly about how they were feeling.

The resulting benefits respondents identified included reducing burnout and compassion fatigue, improving professional practice through self-reflection and evaluation, increased self-awareness and understanding, being better able to support children and families and improving teacher retention.

A support and supervision system in schools will specifically benefit the DSL/Deputy in that it will offer (not an exhaustive list):

- Support in dealing with emotionally-challenging situations.
- Challenge and reflection to ensure that all possible actions have been considered and objectivity is maintained.
- Shared responsibility for decision-making.

Benefits to children

As stated at the outset of this document effective child protection work requires sound professional judgement. Staff support and supervision is one of the means by which sound judgements are achieved. Those staff members who are not DSLs/Deputies may not deal with child protection very often and will need access to support to ensure that they are taking the correct action. In this way a system which provides good support and supervision will promote robust, authoritative action to protect the child.

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that all schools put in place a system for staff support and supervision. Please refer to the separate Practice Guidance for suggestions as to how this might be implemented in schools.



Support and Supervision in Child Protection Work

Practice Guidance

**For Designated Safeguarding Leads
and Deputy Designated Safeguarding
Leads
in Schools and Colleges**

September 2023

This Practice Guidance needs to be read in conjunction with “Support and Supervision Policy for Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads in Education”

Scope of the Guidance

Research shows that support and supervision are crucial to effective risk management in child protection work. Staff who are dealing with safeguarding concerns need access to guidance and support at the time they are doing the work and, in some cases, afterwards.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and their deputies are the people in schools who have direct responsibility for managing safeguarding decision-making and responses. However, any member of staff might receive a disclosure of abuse, see an injury on a child or witness harmful parental behaviour towards a child.

Support and supervision may need to be immediate, responding to need and also planned ahead in the diary.

This policy and guidance, therefore, extends to all staff in schools and forms part of the school's duty of care to all staff and pupils.

Possible Models of Provision

This guidance does not intend to lay down a prescriptive model schools must adhere to; rather, it intends to offer suggestions as to ways in which schools might meet this requirement.

There is research that a Peer Supervision Model is a fruitful way of meeting the 4 elements of supervision set out in the “Support and Supervision Policy”.

It is recommended that schools implement a Peer Supervision Group. Below is a list of considerations in setting up a Peer Supervision Group:

- Supervision agreement
- Frequency
- Attendance
- Recording

Supervision Agreement

Members of the group will feel empowered if they contribute to the agreement for the group. The agreement should be written and circulated to all members. It should include:

- Chairing the meeting
- Recording the meeting
- Individual member responsibilities

In order to reinforce the non-hierarchical nature of safeguarding you may consider rotating the chairing and recording of the meeting between the members of the group.

Frequency

It is a matter for individual schools to decide the frequency of the meeting. This will be determined by the demography of the school, how many children in the school, how many logs of concern staff are submitting and other factors.

It is important that the frequency is achievable and that meetings are not cancelled.

Attendance

It is important to hold the meetings at a manageable time for all the participants and that there is an expectation of attendance.

Recording the meeting

As stated above, recording the meeting can be an onerous task and should be shared between group members.

Good practice points in relation to recording the Peer Supervision Group:

- The content of the meeting is confidential to the group members
- Records should be retained in a secure place (paper-based or electronic)
- Discussions about individual pupils should be anonymised
- In line with the Data Protection Act, 2018 and UK GDPR, it is important to adhere to the principle that, following any discussion about a named child or young person, **decisions and actions must be recorded in that child or young person's confidential safeguarding file.**

One to one supervision

There will be occasions when supervision takes place between members of the Peer Supervision Group or with other members of staff.

It is important to adhere to the same recording practice as set out above i.e. any decisions/actions should be recorded in the pupil's safeguarding file.

Appendices

Peer Safeguarding Supervision Record for Schools and Colleges



Peer Safeguarding Supervision Record for Schools and Colleges

Chair	
Record-taker	
Date	
Time/duration	

***All attendees have read and understood the “Support and Supervision Policy”**

Attendees

Name	Role	Signature

***Add/delete rows to represent the number of attendees in your group**

Topics Discussed and Actions Agreed

Topic	Actions/By Whom	Date added to child’s file

Date of next meeting:

Chair of next meeting:

Record-taker of next meeting:

Record circulated on:

Signed: (Meeting Chair)