



**Shaw
Education
Trust**

Supervision in Safeguarding - Guidance for Senior Leaders

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Definition of Safeguarding Supervision


There is no clear definition of supervision in safeguarding and it can be down to interpretation and the needs of the particular institution it serves. However, in its broadest terms it is about supporting key staff who work with safeguarding cases, e.g. DSLs and Deputy DSLs, to ensure they give the very best care possible to the pupils they serve.

Therefore, defining Safeguarding Supervision is a complex and evolving subject. For the purposes of our work across our Trust, we have defined Safeguarding Supervision to mean:

“an ongoing process that includes regular meetings where professional dialogue will occur between those staff leading and dealing with safeguarding issues, and senior leaders or external professionals, for the purposes of; reflecting on practice, identifying training needs and offering emotional support.”

This definition can be further broken down and explained through the following 3 main aspects:

- Safeguarding supervision allows us to reflect on our practice both in general terms and also about specific cases, including ongoing cases. Asking questions such as, “what if it isn’t neglect but something else?”, “what else could be going on and is there something we may have missed?”, “what other external agencies should we possibly engage?” This allows colleagues to quality assure practice, have an oversight of the particular child’s case, and ultimately provide extended accountability to our work.
- Safeguarding supervision allows us to determine from the point above whether we may have gaps in our knowledge and/or skills that need to be filled and/or what particular training needs there are for key individual staff going forward for the benefit of our pupils.
- Safeguarding supervision gives a degree of emotional support to those colleagues who work on the ‘frontline’ of safeguarding, where certain cases can be both upsetting and traumatic for some colleagues. Our staff invest themselves greatly in supporting our most vulnerable pupils and this can potentially have an emotional impact on them. It is therefore important that our key colleagues receive support. This support can be offered in two methods:

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- i. Internal support: this involves our key staff having dedicated quality time with a relevant school leader (member of SLT inc. DSL) to discuss their work and possible effects it may be having on them. For supervision in terms of this policy to effectively take place, this should be combined with point 1 and 2 above in a regular meeting.
 - ii. External support: this may involve a professional from outside the academy working with key staff from a point of view of 'critical friend' and emotional support.

Supervision v Counselling v Direct Line Management / Appraisal Style sessions

Our staff are a valuable resource in protecting It is important to note that sessions may at times concentrate on one of the three components noted above more than another, depending on a number of variables, but that over time all three should be appropriately addressed.

Where some academies 'buy-in' external support for 'supervision', they must be sure that all three components are covered. Quite often external support in the guise of supervision concentrates only on the emotional well-being of the member of staff. This is obviously worthwhile support for any member of staff but in itself does not constitute the full remit of supervision. It must be clear that supervision offers all three aspects. Academies must be aware of this and ensure all aspects are covered. External agencies who only offer emotional support should be reengaged and discussions occur about full supervision. Or academy leaders may wish to supplement this support with the other components 'in-house'. Having split supervisors is not ideal and any such arrangement needs to be managed well.

In approximate terms, supervision lies somewhere in the middle between counselling and appraisal-type line management. Supervisors must be able to offer a professional dialogue with the member of staff about their work and at the same time support their emotional well-being.

Purposes of Safeguarding Supervision

Our staff are a valuable resource in protecting and supporting our most vulnerable pupils and as such, supervision plays a key role in supporting them to deliver high-quality care and support. Effective supervision

supports good working relationships, helps us address any issues, ensures we celebrate achievements, allows the sharing good practice and ultimately care for the adults in our Trust who work closest with our vulnerable cases.

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) states that DSLs (this includes DDSLs), *"should be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters..."* Part of the support aspect should come in the form of supervision offered by academy leaders to ensure that DSLs and other key safeguarding staff are supported in their work.

[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) refers to supervision for key personnel within the social care system as an effective tool for improving care for children. Supervision is mandatory for staff within Early Years as stated within the [EYFS Statutory Framework](#).

The purpose of Safeguarding Supervision can be to (but not exclusively):

- provide protected time to reflect on practice
- discuss and seek guidance on specific cases – review action plans, avoid drift. Provide a fresh eye, talk through intolerances, frustrations e.g. with other agencies/systems
- enable an opportunity for reflection, creative thinking and solution focussed thinking
- consider appropriate CPD/training needs in relation to the safeguarding role
- provide support with emotional well-being, resilience, picking up on demands and developing coping strategies
- have an opportunity to off-load, talk about how they are feeling when dealing with distressed students and the impact on their own life. It should feel restorative and help build resilience
- celebrate success
- identify achievements and good practice
- consider how their role fits with the rest of the school/other services and the community

Who is Safeguarding Supervision for?

As mentioned, supervision is a legal requirement for EYFS staff. In the revised [EYFS Statutory Framework](#) (2014), supervision of staff became a 'must' rather than 'should', which it was in the 2012 Framework.

The Framework states that supervision should provide opportunities for staff to:

- Discuss any issues – particularly concerning children's development or well-being;
- Identify solutions to address issues as they arise; and
- Receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness

Whilst safeguarding supervision is not mandatory for other staff in schools, practice in this area is developing and we are committed to supporting our key safeguarding staff. Within our Trust the key personnel who deal mainly with safeguarding issues are our Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) and deputies (DDSLs). This guidance document aims mainly at those colleagues to ensure they receive the support needed. However, we also have other staff, e.g. pastoral leads and/or senior staff, who at any time may be involved in their role in supporting a pupil. Therefore, the guidance within this document can be applied for the purpose of supporting any individual or collective group of adults if academy leaders so wish.

It must be noted that safeguarding supervision, whilst having a degree of accountability in terms of fulfilling duties of caring for children, is not meant as a form of appraisal as mentioned in an earlier section. Appraisal clearly has some crossover with supervision. In the appraisal system targets are set, for example in terms of performance, activities and training needs and to the professional standards required in providing a service. A focus on how well an individual is performing in relation to organisational needs and priorities should not be the focus of supervision. However, issues related to performance and training needs should be considered as part of the agenda of every supervision meeting from the perspective of what support the individual needs in order to develop professionally and improve their practice.

Supervision Models

Supervision can occur both **informally** and **formally**, as a **one-to-one** session, or as a **small group**. However, a formal one-to-one session is compulsory and line managers must ensure relevant staff gain this valuable planned time.

In addition, it may be possible to meet with other DSLs/Deputies from across a group of our academies, or local group of schools when and if appropriate to share practice.

Each academy can of course include external support for any or all aspects of this to ensure further support and where appropriate an objectivity to the process. This decision will rest with the Principal/Headteacher of each academy. The Principal/Headteacher should maintain oversight of any external arrangement, ensuring robust processes and be in a position to report on the effectiveness of the process to their Academy Council (whilst maintaining confidentiality on pupil names and that of their families). Supervision records should in this case be shared with the Principal/Headteacher who commissions the arrangement, in order to maintain oversight and ensure actions are followed through.

An important point to consider is when the DSL may well be the Principal/Headteacher. In this case the supervisor may need to be someone from outside the academy. Possible options to consider for the role of supervisor for a Principal/Headteacher are:

- a fellow Principal/Headteacher from within the Trust or a nearby school by agreement
- a member of the Trust central team
- an externally sourced professional commissioned by the academy
- a suitable member of the Academy Council

Whatever option is to be used, the Principal/Headteacher must be agreeable to the arrangements.

Informal supervision sessions (unplanned or 'ad-hoc')

Staff who work closely with their supervisor will be communicating daily about work issues, problems arising, changes in policies and procedures, etc. Staff can prompt these discussions to 'check something out', obtain a decision or gain permission to do something in between formal supervision

sessions. In addition, supervisors can check on the progress of cases and work done by staff. This form of supervision is, of course, a normal and acceptable part of the staff/supervisor relationship. Whilst there is no need to record fully these 'informal sessions', any significant decisions taken around any case should be recorded in the appropriate manner.

Where supervisor and supervisee work closely together this does not negate the need for a formal one to one supervision session for the supervisee.

Group supervision sessions

This should not replace individual supervision but can be used to complement it. It will involve a group of staff, all involved in the same task, meeting with a supervisor to discuss issues about their work or the way they work together as a team and particular cases where the well-being and progress of a vulnerable pupil(s) can be discussed. This may be done in the context of a regular team meeting or as a separate session to look at specific issues. These sessions can be conducted as regular formal planned meetings and/or can simply be based on a needs assessment but will be more about the team's functionality and case specifics, and should not include discussions about individual staff's emotional well-being, which should be discussed within the one-to-one session. In group supervision the roles and responsibilities of the supervisor and supervisees should be the same including that the group should clarify and agree the boundaries of confidentiality. **Annex A** is a template for use in a group session.

Formal supervision sessions

Whilst any informal sessions, and/or group session, are important in our safeguarding procedures, one-to-one planned/formal sessions alongside group work are vital for the benefit of our staff on the 'frontline'. The focus of these sessions is wholly on the individual, their development and performance in the safeguarding element of their role, and any issues arising from their work that do not arise on a day-to-day basis. It must be stressed that to gain the most effective results from supervision, then the process must be:

Regular – the specific formats of supervision sessions, in regards to regularity and time spent, is down to each academy but it would be hoped that each DSL and DDSL should be afforded ***the equivalent of two hours***

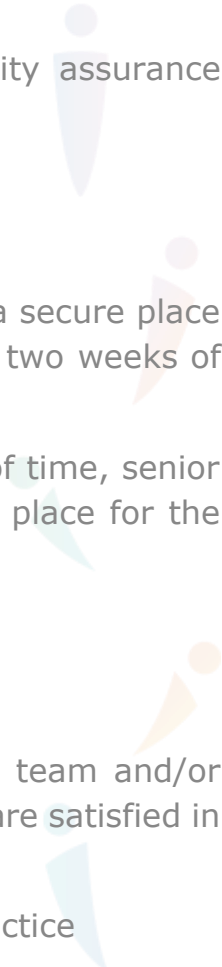
each term, with at least 50% of that being a one-to-one format. This may take the form of a one hour per half term, but could also be split over the term to 30 minute sessions, or even shorter more regular sessions which can also be effective. However, brief sessions can sometimes become too informal and basically be in the form of a 'chat'. It is important to ensure some level of structure and rigour. It is acceptable that up to one hour of the two-hour allocation over the term includes some group work with the safeguarding team, e.g. one half term is a one-to-one session and the next half term is in the team. Leaders must bear in mind however that group sessions must be beneficial to the individual as well as the team and in agreement to the individual.

Supervisees - It will be a decision by the Principal/Headteacher in consultation with the DSL which staff will access the supervision process and who will supervise each staff member. The Principal/Headteacher should supervise the DSL unless delegated to another senior colleague (more senior than the DSL). It may be appropriate for the DSL to supervise DDSLs but dependent on number and structure, this can be under consultation with the Principal/Headteacher.

Planned – each session will be planned so that it is effective and purposeful. Sessions should be calendared and given priority, within reason. Both supervisor and supervisee should prepare prior to the session to maximise the time allocated, including; reviewing previous notes and agreed actions, holding any preparatory discussions if needed, and informing each other if there are additional agenda items. **Annex B** is a template for use in a one-to-one session and also contains sample prompt questions for each agenda point.

Private - supervision is a private but not confidential process. This means that the records are the property of the school, not the individual. From time to time, supervisors may need to discuss the content of supervision sessions with others including the Principal/Headteacher, but this should always be with the knowledge of the supervisee. If sharing of the content of a session is necessary in the interests of safeguarding, the supervisee will be notified. **Annex C** is a supervision contract to be completed by supervisor and supervisee.

Recorded - Access to supervision records (Annex B) should be controlled and all records should be locked away/kept securely, so that others who do not have a legitimate right to see the records cannot access them. Supervisees should be aware, however, that other than themselves and their supervisor, others may access records, and these might include:

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- Senior Managers & Academy Councillors – for quality assurance purposes
 - Investigating Officers – for disciplinary purposes
 - Inspectors – including Ofsted

Supervisors will keep the individual's supervision records in a secure place and the supervisee will receive a copy of notes taken within two weeks of the session.

If a supervisor is absent from work for an extended period of time, senior management will ensure that effective arrangements are in place for the supervision of the staff affected.

Role of the supervisor

The role involves overseeing and managing a safeguarding team and/or individuals to ensure that they're performing effectively and are satisfied in their role. The supervisor role involves:

- offering advice and guidance around safeguarding practice
- providing emotional support
- providing practical support such as further training
- supporting the learning and development of a team and individuals

Supervision is only effective and positive for individuals and the organisation if it is carried out by the 'right' person. Some training may be beneficial for staff but that will depend on their experiences and prior training. Supervisors are normally the line managers of staff but not essential to be so. A good supervisor should be; compassionate, empathetic, honest, challenging, trustworthy, supportive and reliable in terms of personal characteristics. In addition, they should possess skills such as; good organisation and time-keeping, excellent communication skills, conflict resolution skills and professionalism to name but a few. **Annex D** contains 'top tips' for supervisors.

Complaints and Disagreements

Supervisees should be clear about whom they should contact if they wish to disagree or complain about an aspect of the supervision sessions.

Supervisees should always discuss any complaints or dissatisfaction in the first instance with their supervisor and endeavour to reach an agreement within the normal supervision process. If the issue cannot be resolved by discussion with the supervisor, the supervisee should raise the issue with the Principal/Headteacher, and if relevant, Chair of Academy Council where the person making the complaint is a Principal/Headteacher.



Annex A: Group Supervision Template

DSL GROUP SUPERVISION TEMPLATE

Date:	
Present:	
Apologies:	
Facilitator:	
Recorded by:	

Current caseload: (CP, CIN, CLA, CAF, educated offsite, school monitoring etc.)	
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	Childs Initials	Discussions	Next steps/actions and by whom
Discussion points: (concerns since last meeting, progress made, outcomes achieved, other services involved, referrals made, child's presentation /behaviour etc, contact with parents, escalation / de-escalation, reflection)			
Discussion points: (as above)			
Discussion points: (as above)			
More rows can be added dependent on number of cases discussed			

Other Areas for Discussion	Discussion
Policies	
Procedures	
Practice	
Updates	
Training	
Other	

What has gone well?	
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Comments and actions of note to take forward to next meeting or one-to-one sessions	
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This record should be communicated to the group within 5 working days. Colleagues should contact the DSL/facilitator if they have any queries asap

Date & Time for next Meeting	
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Annex B: One-to-one Supervision Template & Sample Questions

ONE-TO-ONE SUPERVISION TEMPLATE

Date:	Venue:	Supervisor:	Supervisee:
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Agenda	Discussions	Actions
Review of actions from previous meeting: Completed actions, any difficulties in completion, uncompleted actions.		
Case Management: Capacity, new referrals, problem resolution, escalation or de-escalation, decision making, next steps, progress, achievements and reflection.		
Personal Wellbeing: External and/or internal factors impacting on work, support received or required, capacity, work life balance, requirements and responsibilities of the role.		
Training and Development: Issues arising where training is required, interest in particular area, policy and procedure updates.		
Any Other Business:		
Date and time of next meeting:		

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING ONE-TO-ONE SESSION

Case Management:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the plan for this child? • What has gone according to plan? • What did you expect to happen? • What is your gut feeling about this child? • Why? • What new information is there? • How long can this situation continue? • Do you agree with the actions taken? • What concerns have been reported since we last met? • What is your role in the child's plan? • What should the next steps be? • Why was that decision made? • Are there any other agencies involved? Is this working well? Any issues to report? • How effective is the relationship with parents / carers and are they actively engaging in the process?
Personal Well-being:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are you? • Tell me how you switch off? • Does worrying help the child? • What could you do instead? • Who supports you? • What is urgent and essential? • What is desirable or can wait? • What can wait? • What can I do that you would find helpful? • Whose priorities are the most important? • What can you do within the remit of your role to help? • What can you not do?
Training & Development:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What support or training needs have been identified today? • What would help you feeling more confident in your role? • Tell me one thing you could do to help X? • Do you need to speak to anyone following this meeting? • Is there anything I can do before we next meet? • What are the next steps for the child? • What do you need to do to achieve this? • What information might you need before we next meet? • What policies or procedures do you need to follow?

Safeguarding Supervision Contract

Supervisor:	
Supervisee:	

We have agreed:

- Supervision sessions should total two hours per term for each supervisee with no more than 50% being within groups;
- Meetings will last no longer than one hour;
- Meetings will be uninterrupted, unless by prior agreement;
- Supervision will be held in a mutually agreed setting, which is quiet and ensures privacy;
- Sessions will be booked in advance and then given priority over other commitments whenever possible. If a supervision date has to be altered by either party, a new date and time should be fixed straight away;
- We will follow the agenda set out on the supervision record sheet. In addition to standing items, specific topics may be added at the start of each session by either the supervisor or supervisee;
- Any discussions and agreed actions will be noted on the record of supervision;
- This record of supervision will be completed by the supervisor and emailed to the supervisee within 10 working days;
- Any discrepancies regarding records should be raised by the supervisee by the next supervision meeting and amended accordingly;
- The supervisor will maintain securely stored copies of supervision records;
- Information and decisions relating to individual families will be anonymised accordingly on supervision records and will also be documented on the school recording system, where appropriate, by the supervisee.
- Where immediate safeguarding issues come to light during a supervision meeting, it will be agreed what action is to be taken and by whom;
- If either supervisor or supervisee believes a child is unsafe as a result of information that has been shared in a supervision meeting, a referral to Children's Social Care and/or the police must be made by either party;
- Supervision meetings will be private as described within this document on Safeguarding Supervision;
- If the supervision session has to be cancelled by either party the meeting should, wherever possible, be re-arranged at the time of cancellation and should be held within 5 working days of the original meeting time.

Signed:











Date:

Signed:

Date:

Annex D: Top tips for new supervisors



	Don't rush through supervision sessions – you might feel under pressure to get them all completed, but it's important to remember that this is dedicated, one- to-one time for the person that you're supervising.
	Supervision can have a long-lasting effect on the supervisee by showing them that you value them.
	Don't be afraid to challenge supervisees, when appropriate. Be clear and direct when you do so and try to give constructive feedback.
	Don't expect to be able to 'change the world' through supervision – be realistic in what you can achieve as a supervisor.
	Get to know the individual and what works for them. A person-focussed approach is really important to get the best from people.
	Reinforce the message that supervision is not about 'telling off' - it's about support and encouragement.
	Build positive relationships with supervisees outside of the formal supervision setting.
	Ask supervisees to develop their own one-page profile that shares information about themselves, the areas of work that they find particularly rewarding and areas that they don't find as rewarding.
	Ask them what a good and bad day at work looks like for them.
	Act as a role model. People have to be listened to and heard if we expect them to do the same for the people they support.



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**Pupil &
people
centred**

**Act with
integrity**

**Be
innovative**

**Be best
in class**

**Be
accountable**