



# Supervision Guidance

## when working with Vulnerable Children



Approved by LGB Committees Autumn Term 2 - 2017 and adopted by Stockingford on conversion

## **Guidance on effective supervision for staff working with vulnerable children in school including in the Child Protection arena**

### **Aim**

Within the Inspire Education Trust, we recognise the sometimes challenging context of our school and the related stresses experienced by all staff particularly those supporting the most vulnerable children. These children may have additional needs or come from families requiring intervention from outside agencies including Social Care. We are committed to operating using a solution focused approach in all aspects of our work and as such use senior team meetings, phase team meetings, pupil progress meetings and SEN reviews to identify issues and reach a consensus view about the most productive way forward. This 'no-blame' approach has been central to our school improvement approach over time and has been a form of supervision mainly for teaching staff to date.

The document, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2015) states that organisations should provide appropriate supervision and support for staff, including undertaking safeguarding training. School recognises the need to provide professional and emotional support for both the staff working to support this essential aspect of school life and also the staff who experience daily emotionally demanding events.

### **Definition of supervision, mentoring and coaching**

Supervision can mean different things to different people but essentially it is an activity that brings skilled supervisors and practitioners together in order to reflect upon their practice. "Supervision aims to identify solutions to problems, improve practice and increase understanding of professional issues" UKCC (1996).

Mentoring can be defined as: 'An experienced person in a company or educational institution who trains and supports new employees or students'.

Coaching is a process that enables learning and development to occur and thus performance to improve. The coach enables the learner to take responsibility for his / her learning, develop and awareness of his / her situation and increase his / her skills.

There are various models or approaches to supervision, coaching and mentoring; one-to-one, group, or peer supervision. The choice of approach will depend upon a number of factors, including personal choice, access to support, length of experience, qualifications, availability of groups etc.

## Purpose of the activity

- Review workloads, if required.
- A place where a member of staff can be challenged supportively and constructively, within mutually agreed and accepted boundaries.
- Issues relating to the work place and to working practices can be identified and discussed.
- Achievements are identified and celebrated.
- Emotional well-being/work life balance is considered.
- A place to offload.
- Review the progress of a case in the child protection arena.
- Review the effectiveness of provision for a child with additional needs.

## Structure

Supervision in the school may be offered both internally and /or externally.

**Internal supervision** - This may well be led by the school's designated Child Protection Lead and will be undertaken with all staff who have a case load of work in this area. Our Learning Mentors across the four schools meet regularly and the Executive Principal joins these meetings once a term and on invitation. Our Safeguarding Governors are highly experienced in Safeguarding and meet with the Learning Mentors on a termly basis.

**External supervision** - this will be peer to peer supervision from a colleague in another school, network or other agreed supportive structure. This should be undertaken with lead professional to lead professional but schools could extend the arrangement if they wished to secure extended external engagement.

If the Headteacher is not directly involved in the supervision then they should ensure themselves that the process is robust and be in a position to report, in general terms, on the effectiveness of the process to their Local Governing Body.

## Practicalities

- Frequency and length - these meeting should take place once a half term.
- Supervision should take place in a private and uninterrupted space during the working day.
- Recording supervision - It is the supervisor's responsibility to take notes and make sure they are copied, circulated and filed. Both parties need to agree and sign that they are accurate. Records must be kept in a secure location. The records themselves must be kept in a format that suites both parties however a

summary sheet of actions will be completed during or immediately after the session.

- Should the supervisor leave then the replacement would have access to the previous six months records.

### **Confidentiality**

Issues discussed within a supervision session will ordinarily be confidential. There are however certain circumstances where confidentiality will be breached. These are set out below in order to everyone involved in an activity to be clear.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Response</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour or activities which bring the school into disrepute.</li> <li>• Harm to self or others</li> <li>• Illegal activity</li> <li>• Actions of gross Misconduct</li> <li>• Activities where child protection and vulnerable adult's policies apply</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a duty as an employee to report/action through the appropriate channels.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities that may lead to disciplinary action being taken</li> <li>• Actions relating to performance and capability regarding putting children's safety at risk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Items <b>would</b> need to be reported via line management structures</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information given by the supervisee will have significant impact on the organisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Items <b>may</b> need to be reported via line management structures.</li> </ul>

### **Starting individual supervision**

- Signing Contracts - By the end of the *THIRD* session it is expected that a supervision contract has been discussed by both parties, signed and copied to the file (sample attached).
- Preparing for supervision - Both parties should prepare themselves for the meeting including:-
  - Review previous notes and agreed actions - ongoing between sessions;
  - Hold any preparatory discussions if needed, to ensure the meeting has maximum impact;
  - Alert each other if there are new big agenda items.

### **Guidance notes for supervision (individual and group)**

Each person in supervision will have their own style and approach: however, the following agenda is provided as a checklist to ensure that all core items are covered.

- Welcome and informal opener.
- Setting agenda - both parties to input.
- General offload and information sharing.
- Review notes and agreed actions from previous meeting.
- Specific case load issues discussed.
- Problem solving and finding solutions.
- Recognise and celebrate achievement.
- Job related resource and support needs.
- AOB.

### **Working guidelines for Good Practice**

Creating the right environment is an important element but we must accept that this is not always possible within school, however we should strive to:

- Have a quiet private space to allow for open discussion;
- Ensure a relaxed atmosphere possibly with refreshments;
- Try to avoid telephone interruptions;
- Prioritise this time and avoid interruptions;
- Make sure you keep to agreed starting and stopping times;
- Consider the time of day supervision is scheduled.

Appendix 1

Supervision Contract.

Frequency and length: \_\_\_\_\_

Creating the agenda: \_\_\_\_\_

How will we plan for the supervision?

What I expect from supervision?

If there are difficulties with supervision we will move forward by

Records of the sessions will be kept by: \_\_\_\_\_

In practice, confidentiality will operate by

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of approval: Autumn 2 2017

Signature: Head Teacher

Signature: Chair of Local Governing Body

Renewal Date:

A signed copy is held in the Executive Principal's MAT Office