BDMAT
Birmingham Diocesan
Multi-Academy Trust

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in Schools Supervision Policy & Guidance (model policy to be amended by schools)

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Birmingham Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This 'model' policy provides a template for use in schools in BDMAT for the provision of Safeguarding Supervision for the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy DSL and Safeguarding Teams.

1.2 The document is a good practice guide for what should be included in a policy. The document can be amended by an individual school as appropriate.

1.3 Ofsted recommends that as one sign of successful safeguarding arrangements that "There are clear and effective arrangements for staff development and training on the protection of children and learners. This should include training for governors and trustees so that they can challenge leaders in order to assure themselves that safeguarding is effective in their school or college. Staff and other adults receive regular supervision and support if they are working directly and regularly with children and learners whose safety and welfare are at risk" (Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings September 2022 at point 17, 7th bullet point).

1.4 The document, Working Together to Safeguarding Children HM Government, 2018, updated July 2022 on page 59 states that the "Designated practitioner roles should always be explicitly defined in job descriptions. Practitioners should be given sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively."

1.5 Keeping Children Safe in Education part 2 point 104 states: Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure the designated safeguarding lead has the appropriate status and authority within the school or college to carry out the duties of the post. The role carries a significant level of responsibility and the postholder should be given the additional time, funding, training, resources, and support needed to carry out the role effectively.

2.0 Background

2.1 The three Local Authorities that the BDMAT schools serve all state within their annual Section 175 audits that they require school leaders to report on supervision arrangements for DSLs in schools. These arrangements should provide support and guidance specifically around their safeguarding role, separate from management supervision. DSLs can often feel overcome by constant demands upon them in safeguarding, feeling compassion fatigue which may impact on their own emotional and physical health and ability to do the job. It is now recognised that this should be extended to deputy DSLs and other staff in safeguarding lead roles working specifically with vulnerable children and young people. As the member of school staff with specific responsibility and leadership in safeguarding children, there can be a risk of feeling isolated, particularly when first in the role. Supervision is in response to recognising the significant stresses placed on those working in safeguarding. In response to this need, the BDMAT CEO developed this template policy in consultation with a Headteacher representative and local safeguarding leads for BDMAT.

3.0 Definition of Safeguarding Supervision

3.1 Supervision is a method of supporting staff so they can provide for the needs of their pupils. Safeguarding supervision is a regular, planned, accountable two-way process which should offer emotional support and develop the knowledge, skills and values of an individual, group or team. Its purpose is to monitor the progress of professional practice and to help staff to improve the quality of the work they do, thus improving outcomes for children as well as achieving agreed objectives. Supervision also provides an opportunity to ensure that codes of conduct and standards of practice are maintained therefore promoting a safe culture. This will relate to Teaching Standards.

3.2 The definition of supervision that is often used for school settings, 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)'

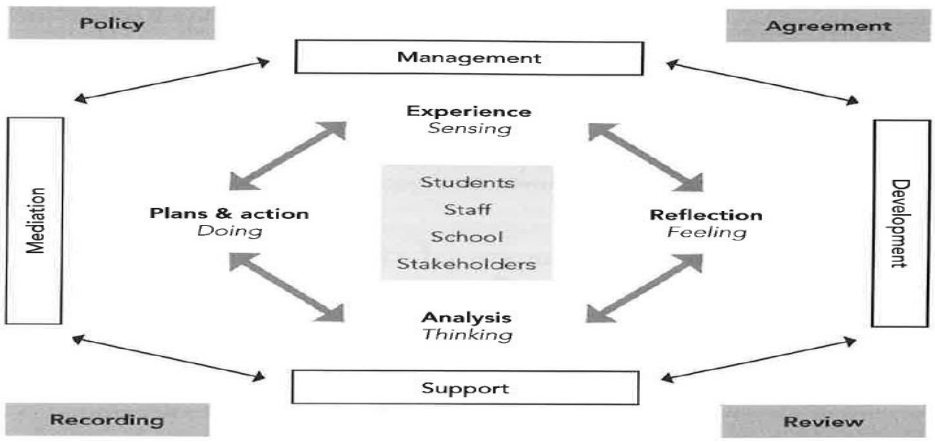

Figure 2.1: 4x4x4 model of supervision. Developed from Morrison T (2005) *Staff Supervision in Social Care* (3rd edition). Brighton: Pavilion Publishing and Media.

4.0 Purpose of Safeguarding Supervision for DSL

The purpose of Safeguarding Supervision is to:

- Provide protected time to reflect on practice.

- 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.
- Celebrating success.
- Review workloads and time management.
- 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.
- 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.

5.0 Principles

- Safeguarding supervision is not related to and does not replace appraisal but should complement it.
- It is not counselling and a supervisor at times may need to refer a supervisee to other services such as counselling.
- The relationship between supervisor and supervisees should be positive and trusting.
- The school SLT/Governors should see supervision as an important aspect of the professionals' work and ensure adequate time is provided.
- The supervisor may not sit hierarchically above the supervisee e.g., reciprocal arrangements, use of independent supervisor. However, where someone other than the line manager provides supervision, the line manager still provides accountability for the work and should oversee direction of the plan and work for individual children.
- Decision making on a child's records should be signed off by the DSL who remains responsible.
- Where supervision takes place across schools, confidentiality of individual children and families must be maintained. Case discussions will therefore be anonymised.

- The supervisor should have attended supervision training and also be receiving supervision themselves.

6.0 Models of Supervision at BDMAT include:

- Where appropriate a mixture of group and 1:1 supervision should take place within schools.
- For senior staff, or where group and 1:1 supervision is not possible, half-termly external group supervision is provided by the Trust.
- Most supervision will be planned but this may be supplemented by informal supervision sessions e.g., in relation to a crisis, need to de-brief after a session with a pupil or parent.

7.0 Approaches in Supervision

7.1 To reflect on individual cases/scenarios, the supervisor may find it useful to use:

- Tell me
- Explain to me
- Describe to me

And consider 4 aspects

- SENSE – the story, what happened?
- FEEL – reflection, what was it like?
- THINK – Analysis, what does this mean?
- DO – Action plans, what next?

(Morrison T 2005) The Supervision Cycle

7.2 Supervision should enable the supervisee to consider the best way to support the pupil's current needs, reflecting on and adapting responses to achieve the best outcome for the pupil.

8.0 Safeguarding Supervision Contract

8.1 Every supervisor should make a written contract / agreement with their supervisees taking into account:

- Frequency and length of safeguarding supervision.
- Location – supervision should take place in a private and uninterrupted space during the working day.

- Recording – it is the supervisor's responsibility to take notes and make sure they are made available to the supervisee(s) 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 suits both parties however a summary sheet of actions will be completed during or immediately after the session. A sample recording sheet is provided at appendix c. Case discussion with any changes in plan approved by the DSL are to go on a child's safeguarding record on CPOMs.
- Confidentiality – in general supervision is considered as confidential, however there will be occasions where confidentiality will be overridden, for example in the case of child protection issues relating to the supervisee or if not sharing information with senior school management could put a child or adult at risk, or contribute to bringing the school into disrepute, there is a potential disciplinary matter or whistleblowing.
- Preparation for supervision – supervisee should identify cases/issues to discuss and start to reflect on these.

8.2 A sample contract is included at appendix A which can be adapted as required. It is good practice to review the contract and the supervision arrangement annually to ensure that it is meeting the learning needs of the DSL and having a positive impact on their practice.

9.0 Entitlement to Safeguarding Supervision

9.1 It is important that safeguarding supervision is provided to the DSL. If a DSL is not receiving safeguarding supervision at the required frequency during the year they should:

- In the first instance discuss any complaints or dissatisfaction with their supervisor and endeavour to reach an agreement within the normal supervision process; or
- If a solution is not agreed, the supervisee should raise the issue with their Head Teacher/CEO/Chair of Governors/Trustees.

Appendix A
Supervision Contract (Example)

Safeguarding Supervision Contract			
Supervisee:	[Enter Name and Role]		
Supervisor:	[Enter Name and Role]		
Agreed Date:	/ /	**Review Date:**	/ /
Supervision Agreement:	• Safeguarding supervision will be undertaken each half term or sooner if requested and will be for *(insert time period e.g., 1 ½ hours)* • Every effort will be made for supervision to take place in an uninterrupted environment. ◦ The venue will be… • The preparation for supervision will include …… e.g., identifying cases to discuss and starting reflection on these • Each party in the agreement has the responsibility to notify the other in the event of cancellation or postponement. • The availability of supervisors for ad hoc discussions between formal sessions is …. • If at any time the Supervisor or the Supervisee is unhappy about an issue which cannot be resolved, the Head Teacher will be consulted with the agreement of both parties. If the disagreement is with the Headteacher this should be referred to the Academy CEO or Chair of Governors/Trustee with the aim of reaching a resolution • Supervisors will respect the confidentiality of the Supervisee in all areas except Child Protection – concerns about which need to be referred on or whether information is identified that could affect the safety of a child / adult, or bring the organisation into disrepute which may need to be reported via line management, where there is a potential disciplinary matter or whistle blowing • Notes and agreed actions will be recorded, signed, shared and kept securely in an agreed format • Any decisions made on individual cases and agreed by the DSL will be entered into an individual child's safeguarding record		
Supervisee:	[Insert signature]	**Date:**	/ /
Supervisor:	[Insert signature]	**Date:**	/ /

Appendix B

Supervision Agenda

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Safeguarding Supervision AGENDA	
Date	/ /
Time	00:00
Introduction	1. Welcome
	2. Clarify roles and confidentiality
	3. Agreed expectations
	4. Review notes of previous meeting
Specific case discussions (anonymised)	5. Share Experience
	6. Reflections (feelings)
	7. Analysis – celebrate success and good practice as well as consider what could be improved. Giving and receiving constructive feedback on performance.
	8. Action Planning
Reflection	9. Impact of work on individuals professionally or personally and any additional support which may be necessary
	10. Professional practice issues e.g., application of new policies, quality of performance, safer working practice, professional boundaries, role within school
Development	11. CPD support and access to resources e.g., reflect on recent or forthcoming training development opportunities. 12. Barriers to learning, identified preferred learning style
Completion	13. Any Other Business (AOB)
	14. Date of Next Supervision

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Appendix C

Safeguarding Supervision Notes and Action Template

Item	Notes	Agreed Action	By Whom	By Date
				/ /
				/ /
				/ /
				/ /
				/ /
				/ /
				/ /

Name	Role	Signature	Date Agreed
	Supervisee		/ /
	Supervisor		/ /

Appendix D

References and Useful Links

- Keeping children safe in education – Statutory guidance for schools and colleges, Department for Education, updated each September

  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

- Working together to safeguard children, HM Government, July 2018

  - http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/index.html

- Using Supervision in Schools
  - Penny Sturt and Jo Rowe
  - Pavilion 2018

- Morrison T (2005) Staff Supervision in Social Care (3rd Edition)