

Support and Supervision Policy

**For Designated Personnel in
Education**

May 2012

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 (2010) states “Working to ensure children are protected from harm requires sound professional judgements to be made. It is demanding work that can be distressing and stressful. All those involved should have access to advice and support from, for example, peers, managers, named and designated professionals”. (Para 4.48)

Cambridgeshire Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures (2010) state “Agencies should ensure that all staff members working with vulnerable children have access to effective management and supervision”. (Para 9.13)

DEFINITION

Supervision has been described as “an accountable process which supports, assures and develops the knowledge, skills and values of an individual, group or team. The purpose is to improve the quality of their work to achieve agreed outcomes”. (“Providing Effective Supervision”, Children’s Workforce Development Council, 2007).

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.

These three functions of supervision - accountability, support and professional development are highlighted as the core areas to be addressed. It is the role of the Designated Person to consider what needs to be put in place in school in order to address these three functions.

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

Cambridgeshire Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures state that it is the role of the supervisor to:

- Provide a safe environment where staff working with vulnerable children can reflect on their work.
- Be a source of advice and expertise.

- Scrutinise and challenge practice in order to assess the competence of the worker.
- Provide an opportunity for the practitioner to explore cases in depth in order to promote objectivity and sound professional judgement. There should be consideration of the way in which feelings about the work might affect both thoughts and actions.
- Enable practitioners to clarify their roles and responsibilities and how these relate to the roles of others in the professional network.
- Assess training and development needs and ensure that these are met.

The concept of “support and supervision” covers both immediate situations requiring support and guidance and also on-going, planned sessions regarding the role of the Designated Person and issues arising about individual children.

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

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 Person. 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 designated personnel for child protection

A support and supervision system in schools will specifically benefit Designated Personnel in that it will offer:

- 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 Designated Personnel 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.



Cambridgeshire
County Council

Support and Supervision in Child Protection Work Practice Guidance

**For Designated Personnel in
Education**

This Practice Guidance needs to be read in conjunction with “Support and Supervision Policy for Designated Personnel in Education”.

Scope of the Guidance

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

Designated Personnel for Child Protection are the people in schools who have direct responsibility for managing child protection work. 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 in meeting their requirements as set out in Cambridgeshire Inter-Agency Procedures. Rather, it intends to offer suggestions as to ways in which schools might meet this requirement. These suggestions are based on existing models currently being employed in Cambridgeshire and ideas generated by Designated Personnel who formed part of a pilot project. Designated Personnel may choose to employ a number of the suggestions listed below.

Suggestions are as follows :

1. Meetings of the “team” of Designated Personnel within the school. The meetings should take place sufficiently regularly to address the requirements set out in the Supervision Policy. The purpose of the meeting will be to share any issues that have arisen in relation to the role of the Designated Person within the school and to problem-solve those issues. The meeting could also be used to share information about individual children/young people for whom there are concerns, subject to good practice guidance about record-keeping (see below).
2. Termly cluster meetings whereby a secondary school and surrounding primary schools could meet to share issues about the role of the Designated Person and individual pupils as outlined above. This could

also be an opportunity to share information regarding families with partner agencies.

3. One to one meetings within schools where there is a high level of need.
4. Counselling for staff who have been affected by difficult cases.

Cambridgeshire County Council offers a confidential counselling service to Local Authority staff. Further information can be found on the County Council website www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

Attendance at Support and Supervision Sessions

It is beyond the scope of this document to insist that support/supervision sessions should be compulsory. However, we would strongly advise regular attendance since commitment is essential if the sessions are to achieve their stated outcome. (See Support and Supervision Policy for Designated Personnel in Education).

Recording Supervision Sessions (Individual or Group)

It is important to adhere to the principle that any discussion about a named child or young person **must be recorded in that child or young person's child protection file**. In this way there will be a clear paper-trail regarding discussion/advice about individual children.

General discussion about the role of the Designated Person and issues arising can be recorded in the way agreed by the meeting members.

Discussed and adopted May 2012

Rachel Snape
Lee Mawson