



THOMAS ALLEYNE'S HIGH SCHOOL

Support and Supervision Policy for Designated Staff

This policy is reviewed every 2 years to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Governors Learning and Standards Committee 14 th of May 2024	
Date of next review	May 2026

Policy Purpose:

This policy sets out arrangements for support and supervision of staff who work with vulnerable children in at Thomas Alleyne's High School, to support the supervision process and incorporates statutory guidance within 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023) in section 158 it states:

158. Lead practitioners should have access to high quality supervision. Effective supervision can play a critical role in ensuring a clear focus on a child's welfare and support practitioners to reflect critically on the impact of their decisions on the child and their family. All lead practitioners should also continue to receive appropriate supervision and support for continuing professional development and to maintain professional registration, where appropriate, within their existing line management arrangements.

Safeguarding supervision has been demonstrated, to be fundamental in supporting frontline practitioners in deliver high quality care, providing risk analysis and individual action plans (NSPCC, 2015).

Annex C in "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (September 2023) states that:

The designated safeguarding lead should have the appropriate status and authority within the school or college to carry out the duties of the post. The role of the designated safeguarding lead carries a significant level of responsibility, and they should be given the additional time, funding, training, resources and support they need to carry out the role effectively. Their additional responsibilities include providing advice and support to other staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and/or supporting other staff to do so, and contributing to the assessment of children.

Definition of Safeguarding Supervision:

Supervision is a method of supporting staff so they can provide for the needs of the children. 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. This may be part of supervision or can take place separately especially where supervision is not given by the line manager/DSL.

'Working Together to Safeguard Children' guidance (2023) clearly promotes effective safeguarding supervision and the recognition of the emotional impact of the safeguarding role on practitioners.

Further to this, Munro (2011) stated the importance of effective supervision to protect and identify vulnerable children and young people, as it provides the basis of sound professional judgements and partnership working. The importance of effective safeguarding supervision has been highlighted as a key theme in serious case reviews.

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.

Purpose of Safeguarding Supervision for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs):

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 focused 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.

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.
- 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 designated safeguarding leads with issues arising about individual children. There are a number of possible models for delivering supervision involving several one-to-one meetings face to face and also phone support.

At Thomas Alleyne’s High School, supervision and support is provided in the following ways:

- The supervision external support used at Thomas Alleyne’s is provided by Jayne Differ. Staff can access this through request to the headteacher.
- The safeguarding board meets weekly and supports all in the safeguarding team to make collective decision and offers an opportunity to check decision making. This also supports supervision.
- 1:1 or small group discussion with or between the DSL and DDSLs. Such discussion allows individuals to check actions and/or thinking to enable them to make effective decisions to promote the well-being and safety of pupils.

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.

A support and supervision system in schools will specifically benefit Designated Personnel designated safeguarding leads 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.

The supervisor should assess the strengths and weaknesses of the practitioner and provide coaching, development and pastoral support (NSPCC 2016). Effective communication between the supervisor and practitioner is the basis of effective supervision, furthermore supervision promotes child-centered focused discussion. Supervisors are expected to professionally challenge supervisees, and together develop action plans for the cases discussed.

Attendance at Support and Supervision Sessions:

It is beyond the scope of this document to insist that supervision sessions should be compulsory. However, the school would strongly advise attendance since commitment is essential if the sessions are to achieve their stated outcome.

Best practice recommends that safeguarding supervision is undertaken as a stand-alone activity and not incorporated into clinical or management supervision (Wonnacott 2013).

Support through the weekly safeguarding board – it is compulsory for all safeguarding staff to attend these meetings with case number minutes shared to all on the same day for collectively decided/shared actions to be taken regarding open cases.

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 on My Concern. In this way, there will be a clear trail regarding discussion/advice about individual children. Any recommendations or actions regarding any specific child protection issues must then be discussed with the DSL and again, recorded in the file on My Concern.

Staff attending supervision are expected to follow these professional standards:

- The focus will remain on the child/young person.
- Commitment to arrive on time and remain for whole session.
- Informing the supervisor and headteacher of non-attendance, as soon as possible, in order that another session can be arranged within the half term where practical.
- To fully enter into discussions, value and actively listen.
- To question differences constructively and respectfully, and to consider the thoughts and feelings of both parties.

Counselling:

Counselling is offered by the school on a needs basis to support staff. This is offered by Jayne Differ and accessed through the headteacher.

References and Sources:

HM Government (2023) Working Together to Safeguard Children and KCSIE 2023 London, Crown Copyright

Munro E. (2011) The Munro Review of Child Protection. London, The Stationary Office

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children [NSPCC] (2016) Supervision Skills in Safeguarding, NHS England. London, NSPCC

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children [NSPCC] (2015) Supervision Skills in Child Protection. London, NSPCC

Royal College of Pediatrics and Child Health [RCPCH] (2019) The Intercollegiate Document. London, RCPCH

Wonnacott J. (2013) Supervision: A Luxury or Critical to Good Practice in Times of Austerity

