Safeguarding Supervision Policy

Low Ash Primary School

Reflective oversight, sound decision-making and safer outcomes for children

Approved by	Governing Body
Approval date	[insert date]
Policy owner	Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead
Last reviewed	November 2026
Next review	Autumn 2027
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1. Purpose

Safeguarding supervision provides protected, reflective and accountable oversight for staff whose roles involve sustained safeguarding, child protection, early help, attendance, pastoral or family casework. Its purpose is to strengthen analysis, decision-making, professional curiosity, workload oversight and staff support so that children receive the right help at the right time.

Supervision complements, but does not replace, day-to-day management, safeguarding consultation, case recording, staff appraisal, professional development, occupational health support or the school's procedures for concerns and allegations about adults. A concern about a child or adult must never wait for the next supervision session.

2. Scope and entitlement

Formal safeguarding supervision will be provided to designated staff who hold, coordinate or regularly contribute to complex safeguarding, early help or family work. The Headteacher and DSL will maintain a named schedule of staff in scope, reviewed at least annually and whenever roles change. This will normally include relevant DSLs and deputies, pastoral and family support staff, attendance staff, staff acting as Lead Practitioner, and others with a significant casework responsibility.

- All staff remain entitled to immediate advice and support from the DSL or a deputy whenever a concern arises.
- New staff, staff new to safeguarding casework, staff managing unusually complex or high-risk work, or staff returning after a significant incident may receive enhanced frequency.
- Where clinical, therapeutic or regulated professional supervision is required, this policy does not replace supervision from an appropriately qualified professional.
- Agency staff or staff jointly managed with another service will have supervision arrangements confirmed in writing, including who holds case oversight and how records and actions are shared.

3. Principles

1. Child-centred: the child's safety, welfare, voice, lived experience and outcomes remain central.
2. Reflective and analytical: supervision explores meaning, patterns, uncertainty, bias and alternative explanations rather than simply providing a case update.
3. Accountable: decisions, actions, timescales, ownership, rationale and outcomes are clear and recorded.
4. Supportive and appropriately challenging: supervisors provide emotional containment while testing assumptions, drift, disguised compliance, over-optimism and professional disagreement.
5. Inclusive and anti-discriminatory: supervision considers identity, culture, disability, communication, poverty, family context, power and disproportionality without stereotyping.
6. Trauma-informed but not risk-blind: staff impact is recognised while maintaining professional boundaries, curiosity and action.
7. Timely: urgent matters are escalated immediately and are not held until scheduled supervision.
8. Proportionate confidentiality: discussion is private but not secret, and information is shared where needed to protect a child, adult or member of staff.

4. Functions of supervision

Function	What supervision should achieve
Management and accountability	Clear role, authority and workload; oversight of case status, decisions, drift, escalation, recording, multi-agency work and compliance with school and local safeguarding procedures.
Professional development	Reflection on knowledge, skills, judgement, evidence, professional curiosity, communication, challenge, information sharing and identified training or development needs.
Personal support	Recognition of the emotional impact of safeguarding work, signs of stress or vicarious trauma, boundaries, wellbeing and access to appropriate managerial, occupational health or employee assistance support.
Quality assurance and learning	Identification of themes, barriers, recurring practice issues, learning from incidents, complaints, audits, child safeguarding practice reviews and feedback from children and families.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Governing Body	Approves the policy and seeks assurance that effective supervision arrangements support safeguarding, workforce wellbeing and organisational learning. Governors do not access identifiable supervision records unless lawfully required for a specific process.
Headteacher	Ensures sufficient trained supervisory capacity, protected time, secure systems, escalation arrangements and audit. Resolves barriers and receives thematic assurance without unnecessary personal or case detail.

Role	Responsibilities
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Oversees the supervision framework, maintains the scope and schedule, allocates suitably skilled supervisors, assures case recording and escalation, and identifies themes for training and policy improvement.
Supervisor	Contracts the relationship; prepares; creates a safe but challenging space; reviews actions and workload; tests analysis; ensures immediate safeguarding action; makes an accurate record; escalates concerns; and works within competence.
Supervisee	Attends and prepares; brings an accurate case and workload overview; participates openly; raises uncertainty and disagreement; records case decisions on CPOMS or the relevant child record; completes actions; and seeks urgent help between sessions.
Line manager	Coordinates management, wellbeing, capability and workload matters where the supervisor is not the line manager, while maintaining appropriate boundaries and information sharing.

6. Supervisor suitability and training

- Supervisors must have sufficient safeguarding knowledge, authority, experience and skill to provide reflective challenge and oversee the work concerned.
- Supervisors will complete appropriate safeguarding supervision training and refresh learning in response to changes in guidance, local procedures, audit findings or role.
- Supervisors must recognise the limits of their competence and obtain advice from the DSL, Headteacher, Bradford Education Safeguarding Team, children's social care, police, health or other relevant professionals where necessary.
- Where one supervisor cannot provide sufficient independence or expertise, co-supervision, external consultation or a change of supervisor will be considered.

7. Frequency, duration and protected time

Circumstance	Minimum expectation
Staff with regular safeguarding, early help or family casework	Formal supervision at least once every half term, normally every 6 working weeks.
New to role, newly qualified or new to complex casework	At least monthly for an initial period agreed in the contract, normally the first term, then reviewed.
Heightened risk, multiple complex cases, significant incident or rapid change	Frequency increased immediately according to need, potentially weekly or fortnightly for a defined period.
Part-time staff	A proportionate schedule that maintains effective oversight; part-time status must not result in unsafe gaps.
Session duration	Normally 60 to 90 minutes, adjusted to workload and complexity. Adequate time must be protected to complete meaningful analysis and recording.

Sessions will be planned for the year where possible. Cancellation should be exceptional. A cancelled session must be rearranged promptly, normally within 10 working days, and sooner where risk or workload requires. Persistent slippage will be escalated to the DSL and Headteacher.

8. Supervision agreement

At the start of the supervisory relationship, and at least annually, the supervisor and supervisee will agree and sign a supervision agreement covering:

- purpose, scope, frequency, duration, venue and preparation;
- roles, authority, expectations and how challenge will be managed;
- confidentiality and its limits, including safeguarding, conduct, health and safety and legal disclosure;
- recording, access, storage, retention and correction of factual inaccuracies;
- how urgent matters are raised between sessions and who provides cover during absence;
- how disagreement, missed supervision, complaints or conflicts of interest will be escalated;
- how actions on the supervision record connect to the child's CPOMS or other formal case record.

9. Preparation and agenda

The supervisee will arrive with an up-to-date overview of workload and priority cases. The supervisor will review previous actions and relevant alerts. Each session should normally cover:

- wellbeing, capacity, workload and immediate risks;
- outstanding actions from the previous session;
- priority case discussion, including the child's voice and lived experience;
- chronology, current risk and protective factors, family and network strengths, change since the last review and evidence of impact;
- professional network, information sharing, consent, disagreement, escalation and contingency planning;
- cases approaching closure, step-down, transfer or transition and the sustainability of outcomes;
- practice reflection, equality and bias, learning, training and support needs;
- summary of decisions, actions, owner, timescale and review point.

10. Case discussion and professional challenge

Supervision should move beyond description. The supervisor will use respectful, evidence-seeking questions, for example: What is life like for this child now? What has changed? What evidence supports the assessment? What might we be missing? Whose voice is absent? Is the plan reducing risk or only recording activity? Is there drift, delay, repeated non-engagement or disguised compliance? What will happen if the current plan does not work?

Professional disagreement must be recorded and resolved through the school's and Bradford safeguarding escalation arrangements. The supervisor's view does not remove the supervisee's professional responsibility to raise concerns or escalate where a child may remain at risk.

11. Immediate safeguarding and escalation

9. If information indicates immediate danger or urgent medical need, follow emergency procedures and call 999 where required.
10. Report new or escalating concerns to the DSL or deputy without delay. Make referrals or seek advice through the current local pathway where threshold is met.
11. Record the concern, information shared, action, decision, rationale, owner and outcome promptly on CPOMS or the relevant child record.

12. Inform the supervisor of significant developments, but do not wait for supervision or for the supervisor to be available.
13. Where safeguarding practice, management response or inter-agency action remains inadequate, follow escalation and whistleblowing procedures.

12. Recording and case records

- The supervisor will complete a supervision record for every formal session. The record will distinguish fact, reflection, professional opinion, decision and action.
- The supervisee will be given access to the record and an opportunity to identify factual inaccuracies. Disagreement will be recorded rather than removed.
- Any decision or action about an identifiable child must also be recorded promptly in that child's CPOMS record or other approved case record. The supervision note is not a substitute for the child's record.
- Records will include the date, participants, cases or themes considered, analysis, decisions, rationale, actions, responsible person, deadline, review outcome and date of next supervision.
- Supervision records may be inspected for safeguarding audit, complaint, disciplinary, legal, regulatory, child safeguarding practice review or other authorised process. Staff must write records on the basis that lawful disclosure may be required.
- An organisational change, absence or change of supervisor will include a secure handover of outstanding actions and significant risks.

13. Confidentiality, data protection and retention

Supervision is confidential within stated limits. Confidentiality may be overridden where information indicates risk to a child or adult, a safeguarding or conduct concern about an adult, serious health and safety risk, criminality, or another legal or regulatory duty. Only relevant and proportionate information will be shared.

Records will be stored in the approved restricted-access system, separate from general personnel notes where appropriate. Access will be limited to those with a legitimate role. Retention and disposal will follow the school's records management schedule, data protection policy and any applicable safeguarding, employment, insurance or legal requirements. Personal data must not be copied into informal notebooks, personal drives or unapproved systems.

14. Group and ad hoc supervision

Group supervision can support shared analysis, peer learning and coordinated work where several practitioners are involved. It does not automatically replace individual supervision, particularly where personal support, performance, conduct, conflict, wellbeing or confidential matters need to be discussed. The facilitator will agree boundaries, ensure psychologically safe participation, prevent group consensus from replacing evidence-based analysis, and record attendance, decisions and actions. Child-specific decisions must also appear on the child's formal record.

Ad hoc consultation is encouraged and should be available between formal sessions. Significant advice, decisions and actions must be recorded and reviewed at the next formal session. Informal access must never become a substitute for scheduled supervision.

15. Wellbeing, boundaries and fitness to practise

Safeguarding work can have a significant emotional impact. Supervision should identify signs of stress, overload, vicarious trauma, blurred boundaries or reduced professional functioning. Agreed support may include workload adjustment, debrief, line-management support, the Education Support Employee Assistance Programme, occupational

health, medical advice or temporary change to duties. Supervision is not therapy. Where there is a concern about fitness to practise, conduct or capability, the supervisor will follow the appropriate school procedure and explain this boundary to the supervisee.

16. Concerns or allegations about adults

Any safeguarding concern or allegation about a staff member, supply teacher, volunteer, contractor or other adult, including a low-level concern, must be reported through the school's relevant procedure and must not be managed solely within supervision. Concerns about the Headteacher must be reported to the Chair of Governors. The relevant decision-maker will consider consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer and other agencies in accordance with current statutory and local guidance.

17. Quality assurance and governance

The DSL and Headteacher will review the effectiveness of supervision at least termly. Assurance will focus on whether supervision is timely, reflective, child-centred and translated into safer practice, not simply whether meetings occurred.

- coverage of eligible staff, frequency, cancellations and timeliness of rearrangement;
- completion and review of actions, including evidence on child records;
- quality of analysis, challenge, escalation, contingency planning and the child's voice;
- workload, staff support, training needs and supervisory capacity;
- themes such as drift, thresholds, attendance, neglect, exploitation, domestic abuse, online harm and multi-agency barriers;
- learning from audits, incidents, complaints, local and national reviews and feedback from practitioners and families.

Governors will receive anonymised thematic assurance. Supervision records will not be routinely shared with governors. Any audit sample will be proportionate, authorised and handled securely.

18. Missed supervision, disagreement and complaints

14. The supervisee should first raise missed supervision, an unsafe gap or difficulty within the relationship with the supervisor.
15. If unresolved, the matter should be raised with the DSL or Headteacher. Where the DSL is the supervisor, it should be raised with the Headteacher.
16. Concerns involving the Headteacher should be raised with the Chair of Governors.
17. Where the concern relates to safeguarding practice and cannot be resolved internally, staff must use escalation or whistleblowing routes. The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line is available on 0800 028 0285.
18. No member of staff will be disadvantaged for raising a genuine concern in good faith.

19. Review and linked documents

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner following significant statutory or local guidance, organisational change, a serious incident, audit finding or child safeguarding practice review. It should be read alongside the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing Policy, Low-Level Concerns or Allegations Against Staff procedures, Data Protection and Records Management policies, Early Help procedures, Attendance Policy, Staff Wellbeing arrangements and Bradford District Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.

Appendix 1: Supervision agreement

Item	Agreement
Supervisor and supervisee	Names, roles and line-management relationship:
Purpose and scope	Roles, casework or responsibilities covered:
Frequency and duration	Agreed minimum, review trigger and protected time:
Venue / method	Private location or approved secure online arrangement:
Preparation	Case list, actions, documents and notice required:
Confidentiality	Limits and circumstances requiring information sharing:
Recording	Who records, access, correction, storage and retention:
Urgent contact and cover	DSL/deputy route and arrangement during absence:
Disagreement and escalation	Named escalation route:
Annual review date	Date:
Signatures	Supervisee: Supervisor: Date:

Appendix 2: Supervision record template

Field	Record
Session details	Date, time, location, supervisor, supervisee, apologies/cancellation reason:
Wellbeing and capacity	Current workload, impact, support or adjustments:
Previous actions	Completed, outstanding, barriers and escalation:
Cases / themes considered	Use child identifiers in line with the approved secure system:
Analysis	Child's voice and lived experience; chronology; risk and protective factors; strengths; change; uncertainty; equality; professional network:
Decisions and rationale	What was decided and why; alternatives considered:
Actions	Action, owner, deadline, contingency and review point:
Case recording	Confirmation that child-specific decisions/actions have been entered on CPOMS or the approved case record:
Learning and development	Practice reflection, training, guidance or support:
Next session	Date and any enhanced frequency required:
Record agreement	Supervisor completed / supervisee reviewed / disagreement noted:

Appendix 3: Reflective case prompts

- What is the child experiencing day to day, and how do we know?
- What has the child said, communicated or shown? What support was needed to hear the child?
- What are the strengths, protective factors, harm, risk and unmet need?
- What has changed since the last review, and is change sustained?
- Are we seeing events separately when the chronology shows a pattern?
- Who is missing from the assessment, including fathers, partners, wider family or relevant agencies?

- Are culture, disability, neurodiversity, poverty, language, identity or professional bias affecting interpretation or access?
- Is non-engagement increasing risk, and is there evidence of disguised compliance or avoidance?
- Is the plan outcome-focused, specific and time-bound? What is the contingency if progress is insufficient?
- Does the case need escalation, referral, professional challenge, closure or step-down?

Appendix 4: Key sources

- Department for Education, Keeping children safe in education 2026.
- Department for Education, Working Together to Safeguard Children, current statutory guidance.
- Bradford District Safeguarding Children Partnership, current multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and procedures.
- Safer Bradford / Bradford Education Safeguarding Team, education safeguarding advice, staff supervision training and local learning resources.
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018; Equality Act 2010; Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004.