
Feniscowles Primary School

Staff Supervision and Reflective Practice Policy 2026-27

Striving for Excellence

Approved by	Governing Body
Headteacher	Rob Andrew
Lead DSL	Rob Andrew
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Next review	September 2027

1. Purpose

Feniscowles Primary School is committed to providing a safe, supportive and professionally reflective culture for staff.

Working with children and families can involve complex decision making, safeguarding responsibilities, significant emotional demands and exposure to distressing experiences. Effective supervision provides protected opportunities for staff to reflect on this work, test professional thinking, seek support, identify actions and maintain a clear focus on the welfare and lived experience of the child.

Supervision at Feniscowles is therefore both a safeguarding mechanism and a means of supporting high quality professional practice.

The school operates a proportionate, role-based model of supervision. The level and frequency of supervision are determined by statutory requirements, the responsibilities associated with an individual's role, the complexity of their work and their level of exposure to safeguarding, trauma and emotionally demanding situations.

Supervision does not replace normal line management, safeguarding reporting procedures, appraisal, professional development or staff wellbeing arrangements.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy should be read alongside the current versions of:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage for group and school-based providers
- Information sharing statutory guidance
- Feniscowles Primary School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Low-Level Concerns procedures
- Managing Allegations Against Staff procedures
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy

The Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework requires providers to put appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families.

Effective EYFS supervision should provide support, coaching and training, promote the interests of children and encourage the confidential discussion of sensitive issues. It should provide opportunities to discuss children's development and wellbeing, including child protection concerns, identify solutions and improve professional effectiveness.

Working Together to Safeguard Children also recognises the value of effective individual and group reflective supervision in enabling practitioners to critically reflect upon their analysis and maintain a clear focus on the welfare of children.

3. What is supervision?

Supervision is a planned and accountable professional process which provides opportunities for reflection, support, professional challenge and development.

It allows the supervisor and supervisee to consider:

- the welfare, safety and lived experience of children;
- safeguarding concerns and case management;
- the quality and impact of professional decision making;
- assumptions, bias and professional uncertainty;
- complex interactions with children and families;
- the impact of trauma and adversity upon children;
- the emotional impact of the work upon staff;
- workload associated with complex cases;
- professional boundaries;
- areas of professional practice requiring development;
- appropriate support, advice or training;
- actions which need to be taken.

Supervision should be supportive but appropriately challenging. It should create sufficient professional safety for staff to discuss uncertainty, difficult experiences, mistakes and concerns honestly.

The purpose is not simply to review what has happened. Effective supervision should help practitioners understand **why something may be happening, what this means for the child and what should happen next.**

4. Principles of supervision at Feniscowles

Supervision at Feniscowles is based upon the following principles.

Child centred

The welfare, safety and lived experience of the child remain central to discussion and decision making.

Reflective

Supervision should promote professional curiosity rather than simply provide an update on actions completed.

Supportive and challenging

Staff should feel supported while also being appropriately challenged about decisions, assumptions, professional practice and actions.

Proportionate

Not every member of staff requires the same frequency or form of supervision. Arrangements will reflect role, responsibility and professional need.

Regular

Where formal supervision has been identified as part of a member of staff's role, protected time will be provided.

Responsive

Additional supervision can be arranged when circumstances require it.

Professionally confidential

Supervision provides an appropriate space for discussion of sensitive matters. It is private but is not absolutely confidential. The limits of confidentiality are set out within this policy.

Accountable

Actions and significant decisions arising from formal supervision will be recorded and followed through.

5. Feniscowles supervision model

Feniscowles operates several complementary levels of supervision.

5.1 Universal access to support

All members of staff have access to professional support and may request supervision where they consider this necessary.

A supervisor, line manager, DSL or senior leader may also identify that additional supervision would be beneficial.

Circumstances might include:

- involvement in a particularly complex safeguarding case;

- receiving a distressing disclosure;
- supporting a child experiencing significant trauma;
- involvement in a serious behaviour or safeguarding incident;
- concerns about professional boundaries;
- emotional impact arising from work with a child or family;
- significant professional uncertainty;
- a need to reflect upon a difficult professional decision.

Requests for supervision will be responded to sensitively and proportionately.

This provision does not mean that every member of staff requires scheduled formal supervision.

6. EYFS supervision

The school recognises its statutory responsibility to put appropriate supervision arrangements in place for staff within the Early Years Foundation Stage who have contact with children and families.

6.1 Group supervision

The EYFS team will normally participate in planned reflective group supervision once each half term.

Group supervision should provide opportunities to consider:

- children's development and wellbeing;
- safeguarding;
- vulnerable children;
- relationships with families;
- emerging concerns;
- professional practice;
- challenges within provision;
- professional development and support;
- themes affecting the team.

Group supervision should not become solely an operational team meeting.

6.2 Individual EYFS supervision

Individual 1:1 supervision is available to EYFS practitioners at any point, and will be provided for every EYFS practitioner at least once per academic year as a baseline, in addition to being available on request or where a need is identified.

It may be initiated:

- at the request of the member of staff;
- by the supervisor;
- by the EYFS Lead;
- by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher;
- following a significant safeguarding or professional issue.

Individual supervision will be arranged where a matter is unsuitable for discussion within group supervision, including circumstances involving confidentiality, professional relationships, safeguarding, wellbeing, professional practice or concerns about another adult.

A member of staff does not need to wait for scheduled group supervision, or their annual individual session, before requesting support.

7. Formal role-based supervision

Formal individual supervision will be provided for identified members of staff whose responsibilities involve substantial safeguarding, pastoral, trauma-informed or emotionally demanding work.

7.1 Annual identification

At the start of each academic year, the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher will review the context of each class and cohort — including the number and complexity of children with open safeguarding cases, significant SEMH needs, early help involvement or known trauma and adversity — and identify which class teachers and other members of staff require enhanced formal supervision for that academic year on this basis.

This annual, class-context-based identification sits alongside named roles that carry a standing expectation of formal supervision, including staff who:

- hold significant designated pastoral or family support responsibilities;
- undertake substantial early help or family support work as a core part of their role;
- provide ongoing support for children who have experienced significant trauma, abuse, neglect or adversity as a core part of their role;
- work intensively with children presenting significant SEMH or safeguarding needs as a core part of their role.

Because class contexts change year on year, the list of staff receiving enhanced supervision under this section will be reviewed and reissued at the start of each academic year (see Appendix 4), and may be revised in-year where a class or cohort's context changes significantly.

7.2 Frequency

Staff identified under 7.1 will receive formal enhanced supervision on a three-weekly cycle for the period during which their identified need applies.

Staff receiving formal supervision will have:

- a named supervisor;
- planned protected time on the three-weekly cycle;
- access to additional supervision where circumstances require it, in line with Section 5.1 and Section 9.

The Headteacher may increase the frequency of supervision for an individual member of staff, or bring the three-weekly cycle to an early review, where circumstances indicate that this would be appropriate.

7.3 Engagement with formal supervision

Formal supervision under this section, Section 6.2 and Section 8 is a professional expectation for staff to whom it applies, not an optional arrangement. Expectations regarding supervision will be introduced as part of induction for any member of staff taking on a role, or a class assignment, which carries a standing or annually identified supervision requirement.

Where a member of staff identified for formal supervision does not engage with it, this will first be addressed supportively by their supervisor or line manager to understand and resolve any barrier. Where non-engagement continues, it will be addressed through normal line management, since consistent access to supervision is a safeguarding safety net that the school cannot allow to lapse informally.

8. Designated Safeguarding Lead supervision

Safeguarding leadership carries particular professional responsibility and can involve significant emotional demand.

Feniscowles therefore provides both internal and external supervision for the DSL team.

8.1 Weekly DSL team supervision

The DSL team meets weekly.

The meeting includes operational safeguarding business but also functions as regular safeguarding supervision.

Where the weekly meeting cannot take place as scheduled — for example because of an INSET day, staff absence or a school closure — it will be rearranged and held within the same working week wherever possible, and no case requiring urgent decision making will wait for the rearranged meeting; urgent matters continue to be dealt with immediately in line with Section 10.

Supervision should include opportunities to:

- review complex or high-risk cases;
- consider changes in children's circumstances;
- review the child's lived experience;
- test safeguarding decisions;
- challenge assumptions;
- consider whether risk is increasing or becoming normalised;
- consider whether further action or escalation is required;
- review multi-agency involvement;
- discuss professional disagreement;
- consider children receiving early help or other support;
- identify drift or delay;
- consider the impact of cases upon staff;
- agree clear actions and responsibility.

The DSL team should routinely ask:

What are we worried about?

What has changed?

What is life currently like for this child?

What evidence are we relying upon?

What might we be missing?

Are we making assumptions?

Has risk become normalised?

Is existing intervention making a difference?

Do we need to escalate or challenge?

What needs to happen next?

The weekly meeting does not prevent immediate safeguarding decisions or referrals taking place between meetings.

Safeguarding concerns must never be held for discussion at a future supervision meeting where more immediate action is required.

8.2 External DSL supervision

Feniscowles Primary School purchases safeguarding support and supervision through the Local Authority safeguarding SLA.

The DSL and all Deputy DSLs receive external safeguarding supervision half-termly through this arrangement. This is a standing entitlement for every member of the DSL team, including the Lead DSL, and is not conditional on a case having arisen.

External supervision provides additional professional independence and challenge and may be used to:

- reflect on complex safeguarding cases;
- scrutinise professional decision making;
- consider thresholds;
- consider escalation and professional disagreement;
- explore multi-agency working;
- challenge assumptions or potential bias;
- consider recurring safeguarding themes;
- reflect upon the emotional demands of safeguarding leadership;
- identify organisational learning;
- seek specialist safeguarding advice.

External supervision complements rather than replaces the school's own safeguarding structures.

8.3 Individual DSL supervision

Members of the DSL team may request individual supervision in addition to weekly team and half-termly external arrangements.

The Headteacher or another appropriate senior leader may also identify the need for additional individual supervision.

This may be particularly appropriate where:

- a case has had a significant emotional impact;
- the matter involves another member of the DSL team;
- the issue cannot appropriately be discussed within a group;
- there is professional disagreement;
- an allegation or concern involves an adult in school;
- the DSL requires confidential professional reflection.

Where the Lead DSL requires individual reflective supervision, this will be sourced externally, through the Local Authority SLA or another appropriate professional arrangement, so that it is independent of internal line management.

9. Supervision following traumatic or significant incidents

Additional supervision should be considered where a member of staff has experienced a particularly distressing or traumatic incident through their work.

Examples may include:

- receiving a significant disclosure of abuse;
- responding to serious self-harm or suicidal presentation;
- managing a serious safeguarding incident;
- witnessing significant violence or injury;
- supporting a child or family following bereavement or trauma;
- involvement in a particularly distressing child protection case.

The purpose is not to provide therapy or clinical intervention.

Supervision should provide an opportunity to:

- reflect upon what happened;
- consider the impact upon the member of staff;
- identify any immediate professional concerns;
- consider whether further support is required;
- identify appropriate occupational health, wellbeing or specialist support where necessary.

10. Supervision is not safeguarding reporting

Supervision must never delay safeguarding action.

Any safeguarding concern arising before, during or following supervision must be dealt with through the school's normal safeguarding procedures.

Staff must:

- act immediately where they have concerns;
- record concerns using the school's safeguarding recording system;
- report concerns to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay;
- follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Supervision must not become an alternative location for safeguarding records.

Where discussion during supervision identifies new safeguarding information, this should be recorded appropriately within the child's safeguarding chronology or case record.

The supervision record should normally record that safeguarding action was required or completed rather than unnecessarily duplicating sensitive case information.

11. Concerns about adults

Where information discussed during supervision raises a safeguarding concern about an adult working with children, the school's procedures for allegations and low-level concerns must be followed.

A concern must not remain solely within confidential supervision notes.

Where the concern relates to the Headteacher, the appropriate procedure for reporting concerns about the Headteacher must be followed.

Where a member of staff is concerned about safeguarding practice within the school and feels unable to raise this through normal channels, the school's Whistleblowing Policy applies.

12. Confidentiality

Effective supervision requires trust and the ability to discuss sensitive matters.

Supervision is therefore treated as private professional discussion, but it is not absolutely confidential.

Information may need to be shared where discussion identifies:

- a safeguarding concern about a child;
- an allegation or low-level concern about an adult;
- unsafe professional practice;
- serious misconduct;
- a significant risk to the supervisee or another person;
- information which the school has a legal or safeguarding responsibility to act upon.

Where appropriate and safe to do so, the supervisor should explain to the supervisee:

- that information needs to be shared;
- why it needs to be shared;
- with whom it will be shared;
- what is likely to happen next.

Only relevant and necessary information should be shared.

13. Relationship with appraisal, capability and line management

Supervision is distinct from appraisal, capability and disciplinary processes.

Its principal purposes are:

- safeguarding;
- reflection;
- professional support;

- professional challenge;
- development;
- maintaining effective practice.

Supervision should not routinely be used as an evidence-gathering exercise for performance management.

The same individual may be both line manager and supervisor where this is appropriate, but the distinction between the processes should remain clear.

Where supervision reveals significant concerns regarding professional conduct, competence, safeguarding or safety, the school may need to address these through another appropriate procedure.

The supervisee should normally be informed where this is necessary.

14. The role of the supervisor

Supervisors should have sufficient experience, professional credibility and safeguarding knowledge to undertake the role effectively.

The supervisor should:

- establish a professional and respectful relationship;
- provide appropriate support and challenge;
- maintain a child-centred focus;
- encourage professional curiosity;
- listen actively;
- ask reflective questions;
- challenge assumptions and potential bias;
- distinguish fact from professional interpretation;
- support evidence-informed decision making;
- understand safeguarding thresholds and escalation;
- recognise the limits of confidentiality;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- recognise when specialist advice is required;
- record agreed actions appropriately;
- follow up previous actions.

The supervisor is not expected to provide counselling or therapy.

Where a matter falls outside the supervisor's professional competence, appropriate advice or support should be sought.

15. Responsibilities of the supervisee

The supervisee should:

- engage openly and professionally with supervision;
- prepare appropriately where necessary;
- raise relevant concerns;
- reflect honestly upon professional practice;
- identify uncertainty and areas where support is required;
- remain focused upon the needs and experience of children;
- consider professional challenge constructively;
- complete agreed actions;
- immediately report safeguarding information through normal procedures;
- respect the confidentiality of other people discussed during supervision.

Staff should feel able to say:

I am unsure.

I need help.

I think we may need to reconsider this.

This case is affecting me.

I am worried about a colleague's practice.

A healthy safeguarding culture depends upon staff feeling able to raise uncertainty and concern.

16. Structure of formal supervision

Formal supervision should normally consider the following areas where relevant.

Safeguarding and children

- Which children are currently causing concern?
- What is their lived experience?
- What has changed?
- Is risk increasing or reducing?
- Are actions making a difference?
- Is further escalation required?

Reflection and professional judgement

- What do we know?
- What are we assuming?
- Is there another interpretation?
- What evidence supports the current assessment?
- What might we be missing?
- Is there evidence of drift, delay or normalisation?

Professional practice

- What is working well?
- What is proving difficult?
- Are professional boundaries clear?
- Is additional advice or training needed?

Impact upon the practitioner

- What impact is the work having?
- Is workload associated with particular cases manageable?
- Is additional support necessary?

Actions

- What needs to happen?
- Who will take responsibility?
- By when?
- Does anything require immediate escalation?

Not every question or area needs to be covered within every meeting.

17. Recording supervision

Formal supervision should be recorded proportionately.

The record should normally include:

- date;
- supervisor;
- supervisee or group;
- key areas discussed;

- significant professional reflection;
- agreed actions;
- person responsible;
- timescale;
- any issue requiring escalation;
- review of previous actions.

Detailed safeguarding information should not unnecessarily be duplicated within supervision records.

Where safeguarding information requires recording, it should be entered within the school's safeguarding system in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Where a supervisee disagrees with part of a supervision record, their disagreement may be recorded.

Formal supervision records should be agreed and signed off by the supervisor and supervisee within 5 working days of the meeting taking place.

Supervision records are personal data and may be accessed by the supervisee, or disclosed to them, through a Subject Access Request or other legal process. Supervisors should write records accordingly — as a factual, professional account that the supervisee may reasonably see — rather than as an informal or private note.

18. Storage and access

Supervision records contain sensitive professional information and will be stored securely with access restricted to those who have a legitimate professional reason to see them.

They will not routinely be placed within general safeguarding records concerning individual children.

Access to supervision records will be proportionate and based upon professional need, safeguarding requirements, employment responsibilities or legal and regulatory duties.

Records will not routinely be disclosed to external professionals simply because they provide advice or support to the school.

Information may be shared where there is a lawful, safeguarding or regulatory reason to do so. Only relevant and necessary information will be provided.

Retention and disposal of records will comply with the school's data protection and records management arrangements.

19. Frequency and review of supervision

The school does not apply a single supervision frequency to all staff.

Arrangements are proportionate to role and need.

The school's normal model is:

Staff/group	Normal supervision arrangement
All staff	Access to supervision as required
EYFS staff	Half-termly group supervision, plus 1:1 supervision at least annually and on request or identified need
Staff identified annually based on class/cohort context, and staff in standing pastoral, trauma-related or family support roles	Formal individual supervision every three weeks, for the period the need applies
DSL and all Deputy DSLs	Weekly internal team safeguarding supervision
DSL and all Deputy DSLs	Half-termly external safeguarding supervision through the Local Authority SLA
Staff following a significant or traumatic incident	Additional supervision as required

The Headteacher may increase the frequency of supervision where circumstances indicate that this would be appropriate.

The effectiveness of the supervision framework will be reviewed annually.

20. Training and external support

Staff undertaking formal supervision should receive appropriate guidance or training for the role.

This should include understanding of:

- reflective supervision;
- safeguarding;
- professional curiosity;
- appropriate challenge;
- confidentiality;
- allegations and low-level concerns;
- professional boundaries;
- recording;
- escalation;
- recognising the emotional impact of safeguarding work.

Feniscowles Primary School also accesses specialist safeguarding advice and supervision through the Local Authority safeguarding SLA.

Other specialist supervision may be commissioned or accessed where appropriate to a particular professional role.

21. Monitoring the impact of supervision and governor assurance

The school will evaluate whether supervision is contributing to:

- stronger safeguarding decision making;
- earlier identification and escalation of concerns;
- clearer focus upon children's lived experiences;
- reduced drift and delay within complex cases;
- improved professional confidence;
- appropriate professional challenge;
- stronger reflective practice;
- clearer professional boundaries;
- identification of training and support needs;
- improved staff resilience when managing emotionally demanding work.

The Headteacher and DSL will periodically review whether the school's supervision arrangements remain proportionate to the needs of children, staff and the organisation.

The termly safeguarding report to Governors will include a summary of supervision activity, covering:

- confirmation that weekly DSL team supervision and half-termly external DSL/Deputy DSL supervision have taken place as scheduled, and details of any missed or rearranged sessions;
- the number of staff currently identified for enhanced three-weekly supervision under Section 7, and compliance with that cycle;
- confirmation that EYFS group and individual supervision has taken place in line with Section 6;
- any themes emerging from supervision that are relevant to safeguarding governance, without disclosing confidential case content or the details of individual supervision discussions.

The Governing Body will therefore receive regular, structured assurance regarding the effectiveness of safeguarding supervision arrangements without receiving confidential details of individual supervision discussions.

22. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where:

- national statutory guidance changes;
- safeguarding procedures change;

- learning from safeguarding cases indicates that amendment is required;
- the school's staffing or supervision arrangements materially change.

Appendix 1: Feniscowles Reflective Supervision Framework

Formal supervision can be structured around five stages.

1. Child

What is life currently like for the child?

What are we seeing, hearing and being told?

2. Risk

What are we worried about?

What is changing?

What could happen if nothing changes?

3. Reflection

What might we be missing?

What assumptions are we making?

Is there another explanation?

Has anything become normalised?

4. Practitioner

What impact is this work having upon you?

What support, advice or professional development would help?

5. Action

What needs to happen next?

Who will do it?

By when?

Does anything need escalating now?

Appendix 2: Formal Supervision Record

Supervisee:

Supervisor:

Date:

Next planned supervision:

Review of previous actions

Actions completed:

Actions outstanding:

Children, cases or professional issues requiring reflection

Key discussion:

Child's lived experience

What is happening for the child?

What has changed?

Professional reflection and challenge

What are we assuming?

What might we be missing?

Is additional challenge or escalation required?

Professional practice

Strengths:

Difficulties:

Advice, development or training required:

Practitioner impact and support

Any impact upon wellbeing or professional functioning:

Support required:

Agreed actions

Action	Responsible person	Deadline

Safeguarding escalation

Any safeguarding information requiring separate recording or immediate action:

Yes / No

If yes, confirmation that normal safeguarding procedures have been followed:

Record agreed

Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

Supervisee: _____ Date: _____

(To be completed and signed off by both parties within 5 working days of the meeting.)

Appendix 3: Weekly DSL Reflective Supervision Prompts

The weekly DSL meeting should include consideration of:

Which children are we most worried about?

What has changed since the previous discussion?

What is the child's lived experience?

Are interventions making a measurable difference?

Are we waiting for another agency when we should be escalating?

Have we become accustomed to a level of risk that should concern us?

Are there assumptions or biases influencing our assessment?

Are the child's views sufficiently represented?

Is there drift or delay?

Do we need professional challenge or escalation?

Which cases are having a significant impact upon staff?

What action needs to happen before the next meeting?

Urgent safeguarding action must never wait for the weekly meeting.

Appendix 4: Staff Identified for Enhanced Supervision — Academic Year 2026-27

To be completed and reissued at the start of each academic year by the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher, following the class/cohort context review described in Section 7.1.

Name	Role / class	Basis for identification	Supervisor	Three-weekly cycle start date

Name	Role / class	Basis for identification	Supervisor	Three-weekly cycle start date

This list is reviewed at the start of each academic year and may be updated in-year where a class or cohort's context changes significantly.