

Staffordshire University Academies Trust		Trust Policy Document	
Approved by:	Trust Board		Last Reviewed March 2023
Policy Owner:	CEO		Page: 1 of 4
Audience:	Trustees <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Students <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Academy Council <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Parents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

SUAT Supervision Policy

This is a generic policy which establishes the basic principles that underpin staff supervision in Academies that are members of the family of schools that comprise Staffordshire University Academies Trust (SUAT). The Local Academy Council of each individual Academy has delegated authority to vary the actual procedures to suit the needs of their Academy. They do not have the authority to vary the fundamental principles of this policy.

SUAT is committed to ensuring that every member of staff receives good quality effective supervision on a regular basis. As a good employer, SUAT recognises that the delivery of high-quality care and support within education is a complex and demanding task. Staff are the key asset within our Academies. SUAT believes in the importance of supporting staff because it is the right thing to do and because of its positive effect on the outcomes for pupils. Our staff deliver high quality provision that makes a meaningful difference to pupils' lives. Professional supervision helps this to be achieved. Supervision is not a confidential process.

Supervision

Supervision is an essential part of any effective working relationship between a member of staff and a DSL/manager/professional supervisor. The DSL/Manager/professional supervisor throughout this document refers to any person holding that position in a SUAT Academy. A DSL/Manager/professional supervisor from one Academy could, therefore, work alongside a Supervisee from another Academy. All staff should be offered regular supervision of good quality in order to be clear about what their job is, what the Academy wants them to do and to be supported to do that job well. It is also an excellent way of supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of employees.

Frequency of Supervision

SUAT is committed to providing appropriately timed and planned supervision to staff employed within the Trust, recognising supervision as a core mechanism to help all staff reflect on their practices.

All SUAT employees should have access to appropriately timed supervision, regardless of the post in which they work. SUAT believes that it is important to recognise that staff should expect to receive care and support and as such this may also be offered utilising ad-hoc supervision between formal supervision sessions. It is important to recognise that staff experiencing intensive or frequent interactions relating to the protection of children will, in particular, require additional care and support.

All employees should be offered opportunities for formal supervision meetings with a DSL/Manager/professional supervisor through the academic year.

Where more than one member of staff works with a child/family or across a sibling group, regular group supervision may be appropriate. The frequency of this will be determined by the senior staff in that Academy but all relevant supervisors must ensure that they and their supervisees are familiar with the plans being taken across all aspects of intervention with the family.

The supervision of part-time staff should follow the same frequency patterns as for full time staff. If a DSL/Manager/professional supervisor is absent from work for a long period of time the Academy should ensure that effective arrangements are in place for the supervision of the staff in that team.

Staffordshire University Academies Trust		Trust Policy Document	
Approved by:	Trust Board		Last Reviewed March 2023
Policy Owner:	CEO		Page: 2 of 4
Audience:	Trustees <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Students <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Academy Council <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Objectives of Supervision

Supervision meetings should evaluate and review the work load and the performance of a member of staff, so that where necessary, learning and change can take place. Supervision meetings are part of day to day management and do not replace appraisals which are a long term view of performance. They provide an opportunity for discussion of individual cases, to share concerns and successes, to offer support and to consider future practice.

Supervision meetings are a two-way discussion between a staff member and a DSL/Manager/professional supervisor. To be effective each person must take equal responsibility for ensuring effective communication and must both be equally committed to making the relationship work.

Supervision meetings can ensure that work is being carried out in line with the Trust's Safeguarding Procedures, Improvement Priorities and Ofsted Requirements and in particular, those that relate to the safety and well-being of pupils and staff.

Formal Supervision Meetings

To be effective they:

- Should be booked in advance at an agreed time, and should take place at regular intervals. the regularity of these meetings will be determined within the Academy.
- Should take place in an appropriate room, without interruptions.
- Should have an agreed agenda to which both parties are able to contribute.
- Should be recorded.

During supervision meetings:

- Both parties should summarise any decisions made in the meeting and actions required by a specific date.
- The atmosphere of meetings should always be positive; however, any issues of performance that need further development should not be ignored.
- If concerns are raised, the supervisor and supervisee must seek to identify solutions and identify further actions that need to be taken.
- All aspects of supervision must ultimately focus on promoting the interests of children.
- An important part of the meetings is that members of staff feel able to discuss concerns they have about the conduct displayed by colleagues. This discussion should be based on professional observation where a colleague is not adhering to school policy or practice, or failing to abide by the principles of Safer Working Practice. This is **not** an opportunity to discuss disagreements that arise from personal issues.
- During supervision meetings, staff are reminded of the need to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings relating to themselves (or anyone in their household) which may affect their suitability to work with children that have occurred during their employment with the setting. Any new information is referred immediately to the Academy Principal.

Group supervision

This should be viewed as complementary to formal supervision. It will involve a group of staff all with the same or similar tasks, meeting with a DSL/Manager/professional supervisor to discuss issues about their work or the way they work together as a team. This may be done in the context of a regular team meeting or as a separate session to look at specific issues. Group supervision should be considered for staff from all levels of experience as an additional method of delivering professional development and learning.

Staffordshire University Academies Trust		Trust Policy Document	
Approved by:	Trust Board		Last Reviewed March 2023
Policy Owner:	CEO		Page: 3 of 4
Audience:	Trustees <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Students <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Academy Council <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Unplanned or “ad hoc” supervision

The pace of work and the infrequency of supervision means that staff often have to “check something out” with a DSL/Manager/professional supervisor, obtain a decision or gain permission to do something in between formal supervision sessions. In addition, staff who work closely with DSLs/managers will be communicating daily about issues, problems arising, and changes in policies and procedures. This form of supervision is, of course, a normal and acceptable part of the worker/supervisor relationship.

Any decision made with regard to a child or family should be clearly recorded. Information relating to more than one child in the family should be copied to all the children’s CP records so that each child has a contemporary record of any decisions made which affect the whole family. Where staff members and DSLs work closely together this does not negate the need for one to one time together on a regular basis. This can be an important part of supporting and developing staff. However, it is likely that the main focus of those sessions will be on the individual, their feelings, development, performance and any issues arising from their work that do not arise on a day to day basis.

Supervision Standards

Staff should expect:

- To be given clear objectives and standards, appropriate deadlines and support.
- To be able to ask questions about how things are done and what is expected.
- To be given care and support.
- To be honest about difficulties encountered or mistakes made, and suggest ways in which problems can be resolved or prevented from reoccurring.
- To be told at the time, constructively, if the work done is poor, or unacceptable and to have a strategy for improvements agreed.
- To be told when a piece of work has been done well.

DSLs/Managers should expect:

- To have their knowledge and management responsibilities understood and respected by staff.
- That once clear objectives and standards have been set and development needs addressed, the staff member will produce work to a good standard and demonstrate a willingness to strive for continuous improvement.
- To demonstrate a willingness to listen and act with sensitivity when difficulties in a staff member’s personal life may be temporarily affecting their performance.
- To expect an open, non-defensive response from a staff member when their work is discussed.
- To be able to withdraw an employee from a particular piece of work, or to terminate that piece of work, if there are sound reasons for doing so. If these expectations are not met by either party than the staff member should inform the Academy Principal. In the case of the Academy Principal they should inform the Chair of the Local Academy Council.

Individual Supervision Agreements

The process of developing Individual Supervision Agreements is as important as the written document itself. This process should be begun at the first supervision session though may take more than one session to complete. The demand for ISAs will be determined at individual Academy level.

Staffordshire University Academies Trust		Trust Policy Document	
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The purpose of the Individual Supervision Agreement is to establish a basis for which the DSL and staff member will work together during one to one supervision. This establishment of “ground rules” should be through negotiation and should clarify the rights and expectations on both sides to create a safe, secure and effective supervisory setting.

Access to supervision records should be controlled and all records should be filed and locked securely so that others who do not have a legitimate right to see the records cannot access them. Staff members should be aware, however, that other than themselves and their supervisor other persons will, from time to time, access records. These might include:

- Senior Managers (e.g. for quality assurance purposes)
- Investigating Officers (e.g. for disciplinary purposes)
- Inspectors (e.g. Ofsted Inspectors)

Storage and Retention

The Individual Supervision Agreement and the personal supervision records will be kept in the staff member’s file held by the manager/DSL, in a secure place. When a staff member transfers to another manager/DSL within their existing Academy, their records will be passed on accordingly. Personal supervision records will be kept by the Academy for a minimum of two years. Individuals may keep records for as long as they wish.