OUR LADY OF LOURDES

CATHOLIC MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Supervision Policy 2025-2026

Nottingham Diocese Multi Academy Trusts

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS Moving Forward Together

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Our Lady of Lourdes Mission Statement:

We are a partnership of Catholic schools.

Our aim is to provide the very best Catholic education for all in our community and so improve life chances through spiritual, academic and social development.

By placing the person and teachings of Jesus Christ at the centre of all that we do, we will:

- Follow the example of Our Lady of Lourdes by nurturing everyone in a spirit of compassion, service and healing

- Work together so that we can all achieve our full potential, deepen our faith and realise our God-given talents

- Make the world a better place, especially for the most vulnerable in our society, by doing ***'little things with great love'*** *St Thérèse of Lisieux*

Contents

1. Expectations of the Purpose of Supervision

This policy sets out the commitment of the **Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (OLOLCMAT)** to providing high-quality safeguarding supervision. In line with *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)* and *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)*, the Trust recognises its statutory responsibility to ensure all staff are appropriately supported, supervised, and guided in fulfilling their safeguarding duties.

The Our Lady of Lourdes CMAT fosters a culture of openness, professional dialogue, and continuous improvement. We believe safeguarding supervision is a vital process that:

- Supports staff in managing the emotional and professional demands of safeguarding work,
- Promotes reflective practice and professional curiosity,
- Strengthens accountability and decision-making,
- Ensures safeguarding concerns are rigorously monitored, challenged, and addressed,
- Celebrates effective practice while providing a safe space to explore dilemmas and errors without fear of blame.

Supervision contributes to a culture of vigilance and shared responsibility, helping to ensure the highest standards of safeguarding for all children across our schools.

2. Supervision Rationale:

Our Lady of Lourdes schools require supervision for their DSL provision to ensure that the culture of safeguarding is firmly embedded in all schools.

Supervision is essentially an activity that brings a skilled supervisor and a practitioner (in this context the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)) together to reflect upon their practice. It aims to help DSLs to process, put into context and learn from their experiences in their role. It is not a critique of the work of an individual DSL, but a mechanism to support good practice.

DSLs in educational settings can receive supervision in differing ways, for example, an external provider or in house provision. In the case of external providers, the supervisor does not have any direct line management responsibilities therefore the DSLs Line Manager will retain the responsibility.

The definition of supervision that is often used for educational settings, which has been adapted from the work of Morrison (2005) states that:

Supervision is "A process by which one worker is given responsibility by the organisation to work with another in order to meet certain organisational professional and personal objectives which together promote the best outcomes for service users. "(Morrison, 2005)

Morrison goes on to describe four key interdependent functions of supervision:

- Management – Ensuring competent/accountable practice and performance
- Development – Facilitating continuous professional development
- Support – Providing personal and emotional support to workers
- Mediation – Engaging the individual with the organisation

3. Purpose of Safeguarding Supervision for 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
- 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 the DSL 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 focussed 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 their safeguarding role

4. Principles of Safeguarding Supervision

At Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, safeguarding supervision is guided by principles that prioritise child welfare, professional reflection, and staff wellbeing. Supervision is a supportive and developmental process that runs in parallel with, but is distinct from, performance management.

Key principles include:

- Safeguarding supervision is not counselling. Where emotional strain or personal circumstances impact a staff member's wellbeing, the supervisor should signpost or refer the individual to appropriate professional support services. Counselling is offered through the Vivup Service provided by the Trust and can be accessed via the Staff Portal: OLOL Staff Hub - Home
- Supervision is built on trust, respect, and professional dialogue. It is a protected, safe space where supervisees are encouraged to reflect openly on concerns, actions, and decisions without fear of judgement.
- Supervision is a recognised and valued aspect of professional safeguarding practice. Trust leaders, governors, and school leadership teams are expected to allocate sufficient time and space for meaningful safeguarding supervision, especially for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and those working closely with vulnerable pupils.
- Decision-making accountability remains with the DSL. Supervision can support reflection, exploration, and triangulation of information, but ultimate responsibility for safeguarding decisions and sign-off on a child's record sits with the DSL.
- Supervisors must be trained to carry out the role effectively and ethically. All safeguarding supervisors should have completed appropriate training and must themselves receive regular supervision to maintain reflective practice and oversight.

These principles underpin a culture of vigilance, emotional resilience, and continuous learning across the Trust.

5. Models of Supervision

At Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, we recognise that effective safeguarding supervision can take different forms depending on role, context, and need. Supervision may include:

- Group supervision – where Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and Deputy DSLs meet across academies to reflect on cases, discuss developments, and share good practice.
- 1:1 supervision – where individual supervision sessions are held between a DSL (or safeguarding lead) and a trained supervisor, allowing focused discussion and reflective support.
- Blended models – combining both group and 1:1 approaches to suit the nature of the safeguarding work, the complexity of cases, and the emotional impact on staff.

While most safeguarding supervision will be planned and scheduled, it may also include informal or reactive sessions, particularly following critical incidents, disclosures, or situations where immediate debriefing and emotional support are needed.

Supervision is a shared responsibility between supervisor and supervisee. Preparation, honesty, and engagement are expected from both parties. In group supervision, all participants contribute to a safe, respectful space where professional challenge, critical reflection, and support are encouraged. These sessions should empower staff to explore decisions, test assumptions, and continuously strengthen safeguarding practice.

6. Responsibilities of the Supervisor

Safeguarding supervisors within Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (OLOLCMAT) play a vital role in supporting reflective practice, ensuring staff wellbeing, and upholding the highest standards of safeguarding. Supervisors are expected to:

- Undertake appropriate training and demonstrate competence in supervision, safeguarding practice, and multi-agency working. Supervisors should have sufficient knowledge and experience to provide informed, effective support.

- Remain up to date with national and local safeguarding updates, including serious case reviews, relevant research, and statutory guidance, using this knowledge to inform discussions and professional development during supervision.
- Establish and maintain a Supervision Agreement with each supervisee. This agreement should set out the purpose, frequency, structure, and expectations of supervision. Supervisors and supervisees must adhere to this agreement at all times.
- Prepare thoughtfully for each session, which may include reviewing recent casework, identifying professional learning needs, reflecting on challenges or barriers, and drawing on relevant safeguarding research and theory.
- Escalate concerns appropriately, informing the supervisee's line manager or designated senior lead if the supervision relationship breaks down or if the supervisee fails to engage with the process.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality, while clearly explaining to the supervisee that issues involving potential or actual risk of harm must be shared immediately with the line manager or DSL in line with the Trust's safeguarding procedures.
- Record supervision sessions accurately, in line with the agreed Supervision Agreement, ensuring records are stored securely and accessible for monitoring and review where required.

These responsibilities are key to ensuring supervision is a safe, constructive, and accountable space that strengthens safeguarding culture across the Trust.

7. Responsibilities of the Staff Member Engaging in Safeguarding Supervision

All staff members who participate in safeguarding supervision have a professional duty to contribute fully to the process, ensuring it is reflective, purposeful, and focused on improving outcomes for children.

Key responsibilities include:

- Attending all supervision sessions punctually and fully prepared, in line with the agreed Supervision Agreement.
- Engaging actively in the supervision process, contributing openly and constructively to discussions that support safeguarding practice and professional growth.
- Preparing in advance by reviewing relevant cases, policies, procedures, and any barriers to practice or development. This may include identifying training needs or areas where further support is required.
- Raising relevant concerns or reflections, including ethical, practical, or personal challenges, with the supervisor. Any safeguarding concern involving potential or actual risk of harm must be reported immediately to the line manager or DSL and must not be withheld until a scheduled session.
- Maintaining appropriate supervision records, where required, in line with the Supervision Agreement and the expectations of the Trust.
- Identifying and acting on further learning needs and discussing these with their line manager or supervisor as part of ongoing professional development.
- Sharing any difficulties that may affect the effectiveness of the supervision relationship, to ensure that the process remains supportive, respectful, and professionally accountable.

Safeguarding supervision at OLOLCMAT is built on mutual trust, shared responsibility, and a joint commitment to excellence in safeguarding practice.

8. Frequency and Scheduling of Supervision

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust is committed to ensuring that all staff involved in safeguarding receive consistent, high-quality supervision. To this end:

- Each school will receive a minimum of one safeguarding supervision session per term, led by a qualified supervisor. These sessions will typically last between one and two hours and must be treated as protected time by all participants.
- Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) access external safeguarding supervision once per term.
- This will provide structured, reflective supervision sessions tailored to the emotional and professional demands of safeguarding leadership.
- Schools with a high safeguarding caseload or complex casework may be offered more frequent supervision (e.g. half-termly), based on ongoing Trust review and DSL request.
- In-school supervision for pastoral, SEND, and safeguarding support staff should be arranged based on the needs of the setting and the complexity of the role.
- All supervision should be treated as uninterrupted, protected time. It is a shared professional responsibility to prioritise attendance and active participation. Where sessions cannot go ahead, they must be rescheduled immediately to ensure no gaps in reflective safeguarding oversight.

Planning supervision in advance, maintaining clear records, and ensuring consistent attendance are essential to developing a culture of accountability, support, and continuous safeguarding improvement.

9. Location of Supervision

Due to the wide geographical spread of schools within Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, safeguarding supervision is usually conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams. This enables regular, consistent supervision while remaining time-efficient and accessible for all participants.

Supervision sessions should be held in a quiet, confidential space, free from interruptions by pupils or colleagues, whether on-site or remote.

On some occasions, and where circumstances allow or demand it, face-to-face supervision may be arranged. This may include sessions involving sensitive or complex case discussions, initial induction supervision, or where a DSL requests in-person support. The format of supervision will be agreed in advance between the supervisor and staff member based on need and availability.

Regardless of format, all supervision must maintain the same standards of confidentiality, structure, and reflective practice.

10. Recording of Supervision

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to take clear and accurate notes during each supervision session and to ensure these are securely stored and shared with the staff member for agreement. Both the supervisor and staff member must confirm the accuracy of the notes as part of maintaining transparent and accountable practice.

Supervision records will be held securely, typically via a Trust-approved Microsoft Teams channel or designated secure platform, in line with data protection protocols.

Where individual children are discussed, and actions are agreed that alter or inform the safeguarding plan, it is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure that these decisions are recorded promptly on the child's safeguarding record (e.g., via CPOMs), in accordance with KCSIE 2025 paragraphs 66–67 on record keeping.

Supervision records may be reviewed by senior leaders or the safeguarding team for quality assurance, professional development, or in response to an audit or inspection, with due regard to confidentiality and data protection.

11. Content of Supervision

Safeguarding supervision within Our Lady of Lourdes CMAT must remain child-centred, with a clear structure and agenda that focuses on safeguarding outcomes, emotional resilience, and reflective practice. Sessions should lead to clear, accountable decisions about next steps in relation to children's welfare, including who is responsible for action and how impact will be monitored. The aim is to ensure that supervision drives both high-quality safeguarding practice and professional growth.

12. Supervision Agreement

All staff engaged in supervision must have a written Supervision Agreement, co-signed by the staff member and the supervisor. For group supervision, a collective agreement should be made and recorded.

The Supervision Agreement outlines:

- The purpose and frequency of supervision
- The format and confidentiality boundaries
- Roles and responsibilities of each party
- Agreed agendas, locations, and record-keeping expectations
- Review and evaluation arrangements

The agreement reinforces the professional importance of supervision and ensures clarity and consistency across the Trust.

13. Confidentiality

Safeguarding supervision is a confidential and protected space for honest, reflective discussion. However, confidentiality must be balanced with safeguarding duties and accountability. Information shared during supervision may be disclosed without consent if:

- A child is at risk of significant harm
- Unsafe or unethical practice is disclosed
- There is evidence of illegal activity
- A legitimate safeguarding or regulatory audit is required

Where possible, any disclosures should be discussed transparently with the staff member in advance. Supervision records are the property of the Trust and may be accessed for safeguarding audits, external inspections, or quality assurance processes.

14. Complaints and Disagreements Regarding Supervision

Where a complaint or disagreement arises within the supervision process, it should be addressed promptly, constructively, and professionally. An initial discussion between the supervisor and staff member should be held to seek informal resolution. Where this is not possible, the matter should be escalated to the staff member's line manager through a three-way meeting, with notes taken and agreed outcomes recorded.

Any unresolved issues may follow the Trust's grievance, safeguarding escalation, or complaints procedures, depending on the nature of the concern. All efforts should be made to resolve disputes respectfully and in a way that maintains the integrity of the supervision relationship.

15. Monitoring and Review Arrangements

The implementation and impact of safeguarding supervision across Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust will be monitored by Headteachers, Trust Safeguarding Leads, and Local Governing Bodies as part of their ongoing responsibility to support staff wellbeing and effective safeguarding leadership.

This policy will be formally reviewed at least every two years, or earlier if prompted by updates to statutory guidance (e.g. *KCSIE 2025*) or emerging best practice. The review will evaluate how supervision is supporting staff to make well-informed safeguarding decisions and whether supervision processes are being applied consistently and effectively across the Trust. Responsibility for approving any updates or revisions to this policy will sit with the Curriculum and Standards Committee of the Trust Board.

16. Related policies

- OLOL Central Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- OLOL Staff Code of Conduct
- OLOL Managing Allegation Protocol
- OLOL Low Level Concerns Protocol
- OLOL Whistleblowing Policy
- OLOL Equality Policy Statement
- OLOL Safeguarding Statement