



Calder Valley Steiner Education
The Valley Kindergarten
Making time for childhood

CVSE Mentoring and Supervision policy

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Mentoring and Supervision Policy

Introduction

CVSE takes very seriously the care, support and professional development of its teachers and other members of staff. In addition to the mentoring and supervision outlined in this policy, the staff at CVSE also undertake peer observations of teachers and learning walks. Experience amongst teachers is also shared during regular teachers' meetings that focus on the practical aspects of teaching. As well as these regular teachers' meetings providing a forum for mutual support and sharing of experience in the classroom, they are an opportunity to share experience from external events such as training courses and conferences. Support and mentoring of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and assistants is also a priority for CVSE.

Teachers and senior staff are subject to an annual appraisal that, where practicable, is carried out by an experienced professional from outside CVSE. CVSE also arranges advisory visits through the SWSF. These are invaluable in giving teachers support and advice on current best practice in their particular field.

What is mentoring?

Definition: Mentoring is a collegial relationship which contributes to the personal and professional development of both the mentor and the teacher, assistant or student being mentored. Mentoring is a process of mutual adult learning.

What is mentoring and why is it important?

In mentoring, the mentor serves CVSE and the wider Steiner Waldorf Movement by helping ensure that programmes are rooted in the best principles of Steiner-Waldorf education while also conforming to the best modern standards in education. Mentoring is focussed on the *quality* of the work within CVSE. A mentored teacher is thereby able to enhance the health of CVSE, while serving the children and the parents through their work.

What is supervision?

Definition: Supervision is a two-way process which promotes accountability and staff support and development. Both parties should be committed to making supervision worthwhile, positive, honest, objective and unbiased. Parties should be fair and open and promote equality and trust. Supervision should be a positive experience for all and take place regularly.

“Effective supervision provides support, coaching and training for the practitioner and promotes the interests of children. Supervision should foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.”

(Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 3.19)

Why is supervision important?

Supervision is an opportunity to meet at regular intervals to discuss and provide support and empowerment to staff to make sure they feel equipped and happy to fulfil their job effectively. The meeting needs to foster a culture of open discussion where staff have the time to discuss any concerns, worries and constraints within their role and the setting as a whole.

The key elements of supervision are coaching, training, personal development and the focus on children and their well-being. It should also be a two way process that enables both parties involved to develop a positive and mutually supportive discussion and on-going development plan.

Good practice in mentoring and supervision

Mentoring and Supervision can take place side by side: mentoring is focussed more on qualitative and curriculum related aspects of the work; supervision is based more on training, personal development and the focus on children and their well-being. Many areas, such as assessment, are common to both. A session should therefore endeavour to have a balance of both these aspects, and over time, cover all aspects of the work of the teacher. Commonly, supervision is organised over a 6-weekly/half termly cycle.

Effective staff mentoring and supervision in Calder Valley Steiner Education is characterised by the following features.

1. Confidentiality

Issues of trust need to be thoroughly explored and the importance of confidentiality emphasized. Mentoring and supervision should include a joint commitment to openness and clarity about what may be treated as confidential by both parties (or a supervision group). Any matters discussed in a meeting can be treated as confidential when it is agreed that it is unnecessary to discuss them elsewhere. However, openness requires all parties to be sensitive to those occasions when difficult issues will have to be discussed elsewhere, and to be transparent about when and why this will be necessary and how it will be done.

2. Commitment to preparation for supervision by both supervisor and supervisee, including a review of previous actions and consideration of points for discussion. The structure of the session can be jointly agreed by both parties at the beginning of each meeting, allowing prioritisation of topics and flexibility to reflect current needs. Topics for discussion may include:

- review of last supervision and tasks undertaken
- positive feedback and recognition
- professional development and training
- planning and delivery of the curriculum
- individual children's progress
- progress of the class as a whole
- interactions with families, colleagues and other professionals
- safeguarding issues, as necessary
- equality and diversity issues
- general health and safety issues
- working schedules

However, all topics cannot be covered each time and will need to be jointly prioritised at the beginning of supervision sessions.

3. **Agreed frequency and duration of meetings** – staff mentoring and supervision is often planned on a 6 weekly/half termly cycle for each member of the teaching staff. (This may be on an individual or group basis). Supervision is effective when meetings are scheduled in advance and timings are not changed. Meetings held at a time and venues agreed by both parties with an approximate duration of 30minutes.

4. **Appropriate physical environment for supervision**
Supervision should normally take place in an agreed confidential, comfortable setting where interruptions are minimised.

5. **Recording a supervision meeting**
The prompt recording of mentoring and supervision sessions is necessary to provide an accurate record of matters discussed, decisions made and actions required. Often the mentor/supervisor takes responsibility for documenting the discussion during the session, formally agreeing actions at the end and providing the supervisee with a record shortly following the meeting. Any safeguarding decisions will be clearly stated and recorded in case files (in accordance with safeguarding standards). The mentee/supervisee will check the notes upon receipt and send any additions/amendments to the supervisor. In line with data protection, the supervisor is responsible for the safe storage of supervision records).

6. **Supervision of volunteers**
Ideally, volunteers need to take part in regular supervision in line with their role and hours of work.

7. **Training**
Supervision training is essential for all those leading or undertaking supervision. Training will include general supervision skills and detailed information for using standards and documentation.

General principles of mentoring and supervision are:

- To develop confidence, and increase skills, insight and courage when working with children, parents and communities.
- To establish and maintain a positive and co-operative working relationship between staff, built on trust, respect and a non-judgemental style
- To deepen knowledge and experience of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum and its delivery in a modern educational setting
- To provide a reflective and safe space that encourages a dynamic interaction to address issues and dilemmas experienced by staff members in their work roles
- To reduce stress-related absences, and increase confidence in dealing with complex safeguarding and other dilemmas.
- To ensure organisational and staff accountability and development, thereby promoting reflective, creative, ethical and safe practice.
- To ensure staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities, and that their practice is consistent with CVSE's values, policies, procedures and quality standards
- To monitor progress in relation to appraisal objectives
- To identify and review personal development needs and activities for staff that relate to their roles and the needs of CVSE

- To model a preferred way of working and relating, which can be transferred to other working relationships

Practice in mentoring and supervision includes:

- Mentoring and supervision will be face-to-face, and take place in a setting private and free from disturbance.
- Mentoring and supervision will normally be on a 6 weekly/half termly basis – but the frequency may change depending on circumstances, such as complex child protection issues – and supervision sessions will last approximately 30minutes (or more if needed).
- Mentors/supervisors will establish a shared view of mentoring and supervision, including ways in which staff members have felt supported in the past and what they have found useful/less useful.
- All mentoring and supervision is recorded by the supervisor, shared with the supervisee and stored.
- An agreed Staff Mentoring or Supervision Record form will be used to capture discussion points and decisions made.
- Safeguarding decisions will be clearly stated and will be recorded in the child's individual file by the staff member/key person.
- The Mentoring or Supervision Record will be available on request from the CVSE office for reference to the staff member at the end of the session.
- At the next mentoring or supervision session, both parties will refer to the notes of the previous meeting, and any actions or changes arising from this will be noted.
- During every supervision meeting, it is essential that both the supervisor and supervisee make a note of decisions made and actions required, and these actions are formally agreed at the end of the meeting.
- Supervision notes/records will be stored securely in a staff mentoring file held in the office, and be kept for one year after a member of staff leaves the setting.

Do's:

Be clear about expectations

Explain what supervision is for

Clarify confidentiality

Remain open and flexible, while maintaining clear boundaries

Confront issues and problems

Establish preferred way to offer feedback

Be specific in feedback

Don't

Socialise with supervisees

Adopt a rigid or authoritarian stance

Allow supervision to become counselling

Avoid difficult issues or problems

Roles and responsibilities

Supervisors need to:

- Ensure that staff members receive the appropriate amount and regularity of supervision. This may vary according to roles and hours worked
- Avoid postponing supervision sessions. Where cancellation is unavoidable, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to arrange an alternative time as near as possible to the original time.
- Arrange a suitably private venue free from disturbances.
- Be prepared to challenge and to give and receive constructive feedback.

Supervisees need to:

- Value the importance of supervision and contribute to an effective process.
- Prepare for, attend and actively contribute to supervision meetings.
- Act on decisions made in supervision.
- Be open to challenge and to receive and give constructive feedback.
- In the event of a member of staff either refusing to have supervision, or wilfully disregarding expected outcomes from that supervision, this will be referred to the Board of Trustees to consider and take further as necessary.

Reference

Mentoring in Waldorf Early Childhood Education, Ed. Nancy Foster (Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America, 2007).

Monitoring Compliance and Effectiveness

- This document will be reviewed annually
- This document will be discussed and reviewed at EY Teachers' Meetings

Related Policies

- CVSE Recruitment and Selection Policy
- CVSE Safeguarding Policy 2021
- CVSE Whistleblowing Policy
- CVSE Code of Conduct Policy