

INFORMATION SHEET

SUPERVISION AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Supervision is the action of supervising and managing the ministry and/or work of others.

Supervision and performance management comprise a number of elements including:

- regular on-the-job monitoring and communication to clarify responsibilities, expectations, set objectives, identify goals, provide feedback and review performance
- support to manage the requirements of the role (e.g. challenges, concerns)
- access to information and/or training designed to equip the person to meet the requirements of their role.

While supervision and performance management can have a broad focus e.g. meeting key performance indicators, meeting organisational objectives or targets and provides a range of benefits for organisations, these activities within a parish, agency or entity can play a pivotal role in promoting the safety of children and young people.

Ongoing commitment to good supervision is a key component of a child safe organisation.

CCYP 2018, p. 43

Within a child safety context, supervision and performance management enables an organisation to:

- Monitor the engagement and participation of children and young people to assess the delivery of programs, activities and events to ensure they meet the needs of children and young people.
- Observe the behaviour of those working with children and young people to ensure that they are fostering a respectful, safe and supportive environment.
- Identify any possible breaches of the Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Safety Policy and/or any warning signs that a person is not safe or suitable to work with children.
- Identify the needs of those working with children and young people (e.g. support, learning needs, skill development) to actively support them to successfully perform their roles.
- Demonstrate a culture of accountability in relation to child safety (i.e. 'we are vigilant and will act to safeguard children and young people').
- Create transparency and openness, modelling behaviour that suggests 'it is OK to talk about things, ask questions and raise concerns' and that issues will be addressed.

Performance management in relation to child safety is the continuous process of supervising and guiding efforts of employees and volunteers to ensure that the safety of children and young people objectives of the parish, agency and entity are met.

It is a requirement of the Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Safety Policy that those whose roles involve working with children and young people are provided with supervision and performance management.

WHAT DOES SUPERVISION AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT LOOK LIKE?

Within parishes, agencies and entities, the way in which supervision and performance management is structured will vary considerably.

Supervision and performance management can be provided:

- formally or informally
- individually or in a group setting
- at regular intervals, proportionate to the frequency of their contact with children and young people.

EXAMPLE: INFORMAL GROUP SETTING

Every week after mass Father Brown drops in on Sally, Ben and Tim, who are volunteers involved in Children's Liturgy, to discuss how the session went. The volunteers talk about what went well and also discuss opportunities for improvement based on feedback from the children and their parents. Father Brown encourages open communication and the volunteers are encouraged to speak about any concerns or challenges that arise, including issues in relation to child safety.

EXAMPLE: FORMAL INDIVIDUAL SETTING

Mary is a coordinator at a food bank. She works with secondary school students who attend the food bank to pack food parcels for families in need. Every day Mary welcomes a new group of students. She provides them with a safety briefing and demonstrates how the food parcels are to be packed. She circulates among the students and teachers, talking about the food bank and making sure that they are working safely and that the parcels are being packed correctly. Ruth, her manager, pops in to observe the student groups and their engagement with packing the food parcels. Ruth also observes Mary's interaction with the students and notes that she is warm and welcoming. She also observes Mary encouraging a student who appears to have little interest in packing. Mary talks with the student to find out whether there are other tasks that he might have an interest in, and engages him in labelling the parcels.

As a manager, Ruth has observed the engagement of the students in the food bank activities, ensured that they are working safely and that the environment is supportive and respectful of the students. She has also observed Mary in action – how she interacts and work with the students.

As an employee, Mary meets with her manager on a weekly basis for 30 minutes for supervision. The supervision session is conducted formally. Mary and Ruth both take notes and set tasks for the weeks ahead. During each session they discuss:

- how Mary's week has progressed in relation to the school groups that have attended the centre
- what went well during the week
- any challenges that Mary may have experienced in her work
- any opportunities for improvement of processes at the food bank
- whether Mary has any specific learning needs.

During the supervision meeting, Ruth talks to Mary about:

- her observations of the students' positive engagement
- her observations of Mary's welcoming and supportive behaviour toward the students
- feedback from the students and the schools that have attended the food bank
- how she feels Mary is managing the student groups
- any concerns that she may have about Mary's work.

Irrespective of the format in which supervision and performance management is conducted, there are a number of key features of effective supervision:

- openness
- honesty



- respect
- collaboration
- support
- reflection
- regularity

IMPLEMENTATION HINT

Supervision works best as a two-way communication process that seeks to support and guide those working in parish, agency and entity settings to undertake their role effectively, and in a manner that safeguards children and young people. Documenting supervision and performance management meetings and discussions is a useful way to record observations, contributions and concerns and can assist in promoting reflection and development to promote effective and safe engagement with children and young people.

REFERENCES

CCYP [Commission for Children and Young People] 2018, A guide for creating a child safe organisation. <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/CSSGuideFinalV4-Web-New.pdf>

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