

# Using Active Supervision



- Supervision needs to be a deliberate and active process. Supervising adults need to understand and agree with the school-wide rules, and be able to effectively teach, monitor and provide positive feedback about following the rules in all locations.
- The Active Supervision Observation Feedback form provides a framework that staff can use to observe each other and give feedback.
- Active supervision involves:
  - moving
  - scanning
  - positive contact
  - positive reinforcement
  - “on the spot” teaching of social skills
  - immediate consequences for negative behaviour.

## Move Constantly

- Movement should be planned, constant and deliberate.
  - **Target known problem areas**, activities and individuals at a higher rate.
  - **Vary the patterns of movement** throughout the day and from day to day.

## Systematically scan

- **Maintain constant visual movement** whether standing, walking or talking. Shift your field of view and pay attention to visual indicators of behaviour issues.
- **Look at the students’ behaviour**, not just their games or physical appearance. Watch for subtle contextual, physical or behavioural clues that may be signs of distress.
- **Look at the big picture**, not just one student or activity but as many as possible. On the sports field, attend to individual behaviours rather than watching the game.
- **Identify and attend to signs that are typically** associated with negative behaviour. Watch for games breaking up for no apparent reason; students frowning and gesturing to others, perhaps angrily; students seemingly shrinking back from a peer or peers; quick, rough movements for no apparent reason; someone running away from a peer or peers outside of an apparent game; frightened looks; or someone making a fist or obscene gesture.
- **Listen.** Verbal cues may also indicate negative behaviour. Listen for angry or plaintive tones of voice, arguing, and panicked and bossy voices or commands.



- **Recognize potential trouble spots and scan them often.** For example, if tetherball frequently leads to verbal and physical aggression, supervisors need to keep an eye on this game and watch for warning signs. (Has the game stopped? Is someone holding the ball and keeping it away from others?)
- **Recognize situations that may precede problem behaviour.** Problem behaviour such as aggression is typically preceded by arguing, rough play, high states of arousal, unsportsmanlike conduct and over-competitiveness.
- **Set and readjust physical boundaries.** Clearly communicate about the areas that students are free to use. Consider choosing one play area and making remoter areas out of bounds during recess and lunch hour.
- **Identify areas that supervisors typically cannot see and ensure that they are regularly supervised.** These areas might include washrooms, unused hallways and parking lots.
- **Know individual students who have been identified as having particular difficulties.** Informally check in with them to give feedback and prevent problems.
- **Minimize the time spent dealing with problem behaviour.** If you can't solve a problem or correct a behaviour in two minutes or less, refer the problem to the office (depending on its severity) or to some other prearranged place. For example, the supervising teacher could give the student (and/or the classroom teacher) a consequence slip listing a time for further discussion. When problems are identified, solve or correct them quickly, fairly, consistently and as privately as possible and then move on.

### Be positive

- **Positive contact** focuses attention on and increases the likelihood of positive behaviour while decreasing the incidence of inappropriate behaviour.
- Actively **project a friendly, helpful, open demeanour** that communicates caring, trust and respect. A positive contact can be as simple as, "Good morning, Lee. It's good to see you."
- Increasing positive contacts gives staff more opportunities to **provide friendly reminders** or "precorrections" that help students "get it right before they get it wrong."

For example, just before lunch is a good time to remind students to pick up garbage. "When you are in the lunchroom today, think about picking up after yourself. The lunchroom and school grounds are looking pretty good these days. Let's work together to keep the school looking green and clean."

### Reinforce, reinforce, reinforce

- Positive reinforcement should **clearly describe the behaviour** that is being reinforced. For example: "Lee, I saw you helping Susan pick up those books she dropped—that showed thoughtfulness. That's going to make a difference in her day." The statement should clearly describe the behaviour that is being reinforced.
- **Deliver reinforcement immediately**, or as soon as possible after observing the targeted behaviour.
- **Provide four positive comments for every one negative** or corrective statement to increase the likelihood that students will engage in the positive behaviour.



## Sample Active Supervision Observation Feedback Form

Observer

Date

Setting

Setting description  
(physical layout, expectations, etc.)

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1. Did supervisor(s) move regularly and systematically throughout setting?

Yes  Some  None

2. Did supervisor(s) interact regularly and frequently?

Yes  Some  None

3. Did supervisor(s) give friendly reminders before transitions?

Yes  Some  None

Other comments:

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Start time  End time

Number of staff members present

Target behaviours for observation/intervention

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Recommendations:

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### Student Tally

Target behaviour	Total	No. of minutes
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

### Staff Tally

Positive/neutral interactions	Total	No. of minutes
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Corrections	Total	No. of minutes
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

