

Active Supervision

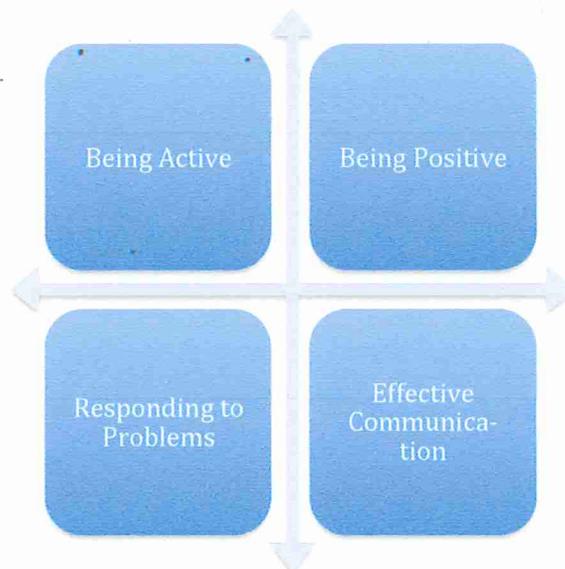
What is Active Supervision?

Active supervision, based on research that has identified what works well with students, is a method of supervising students and physical spaces that will:

- Help decrease problem behavior
- Increase student cooperation
- Make a supervisors' job less stressful and more fun

How Does it Work?

Active supervision is based on the use of **four key skills** that increase the supervisors' effectiveness:



Being Active

What does it mean to be an **active** supervisor?

Moving around constantly in unpredictable, randomized patterns so that you can see students and what they are doing.

How to Move

Moving constantly as a supervisor encourages responsible student behavior because students know that supervisors could appear at any time. Also, this gives supervisors increased opportunities to acknowledge and praise appropriate/desired student behavior.

- Move around constantly; don't stand in one spot
- Move unpredictably in random patterns. Don't use the same route every day, but do have a plan for getting to all areas within your zone
- Target known problem areas and students regularly

Scanning with your eyes and ears so you notice positive behaviors and potential problems right away.

How to Scan

The purpose of scanning is to increase the information the supervisors have about what is happening in the areas they are supervising. Watch and listen carefully as you move to gain information that might otherwise be missed.

- Look for cues in the behavior, body language and voices of students
- Watch and listen for appropriate and inappropriate behavior
- Use the information you gather to increase opportunities for positive contact with students

Being Positive

What does it mean to be a **positive** supervisor?

- Creating a friendly atmosphere by being friendly and open yourself
- Making an effort to connect with individual students and with student groups
- Reinforcing students when their behavior is appropriate by acknowledging it and letting students know that you appreciate it. Behaving appropriately means being respectful, responsible, safe, helpful, etc.

Why is it important to be positive? Research shows that having positive contact with students increases appropriate behavior and decreases inappropriate behavior. It is actually easier to get students to be cooperative and to follow rules by focusing on what they do right rather than what they do wrong. In fact, research also shows that focusing on inappropriate behavior or problem behavior actually makes it happen more often.

Guidelines for Connecting with Students

- Be friendly
- Direct general, positive comments towards students – individual students and particularly groups of students
- Have frequent, positive interactions with groups of students
- Use students' names

Guidelines for Giving Positive Reinforcement

- Tie the reinforcement to a specific behavior
- Acknowledge or express appreciation for a specific helpful, appropriate or constructive behavior
- Get all staff involved so students get consistent messages

Use the 4 to 1 rule to Increase Positives

A good rule of thumb for getting started is to have at least four positive interactions with students for every one corrective or negative interaction. Don't stop at four though, the more positive interactions, the better. Being positive can be as simple as smiling and using words and phrases that let students know you appreciate them.

Great job lining up Way to go
Good try! Nice teamwork
Thanks for having a good attitude!

Be aware of your body language when you interact with students. Be sure to keep your body language positive too. Non-verbal communication is very powerful and can be a great way to show students that you want to build positive relationships.

Responding to Problems

Even with the systematic supervision approach, supervisors will have to deal with some students whose behavior is uncooperative or difficult.

To deal with students who are behaving in an uncooperative or difficult manner:

- Respond to the problem behavior immediately, or as soon as possible
- Take the student aside to speak privately
- Speak respectfully and don't argue or be critical
- Focus on the student's behavior at the time, don't bring up past incidents or other problem behaviors
- Use a consistent approach that has been worked out in team meetings
- Don't take anything the student says or does personally

Communicating

Communication is a key ingredient in creating a safe, respectful and responsible school environment. Good communication:

- Helps everyone feel appreciated and respected
- Ensures that rules, expectations, reinforcements, procedures and consequences are clear and consistent
- Creates a sense of unity and teamwork between people at school – students, parents and staff
- Remember the 4:1 rule here as well