

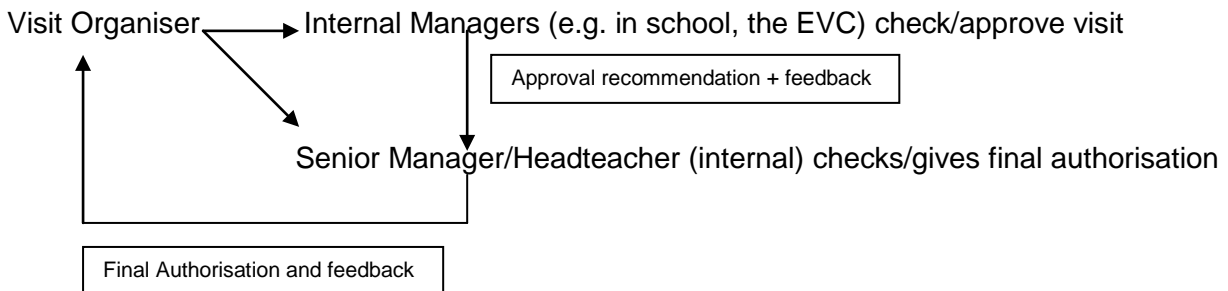
## Chapter 17 - Seeking Visit Approval

(see also Chapter VG1 “Types of Visit and Planning/Approval Procedures”)

### SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS – see rest of chapter below for full details

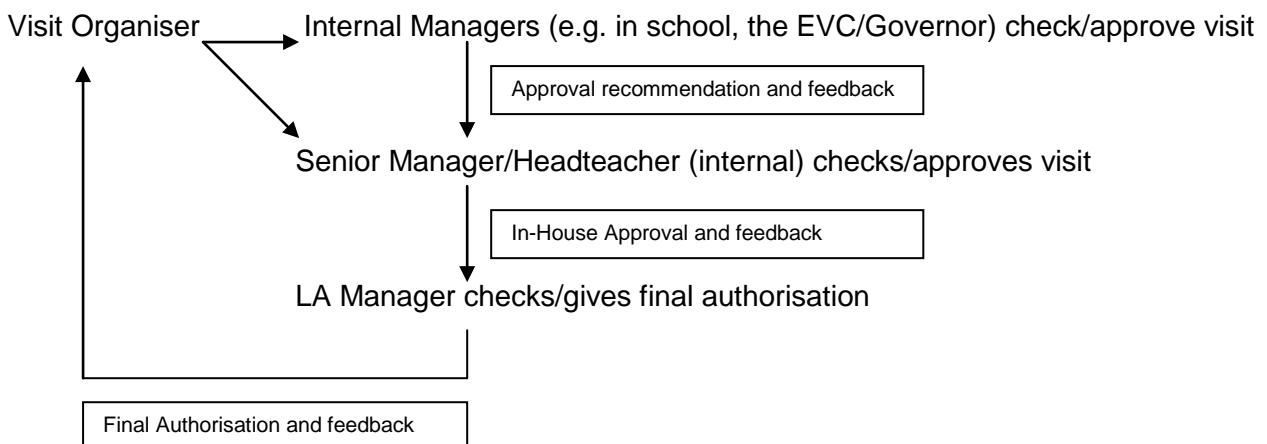
#### A. Day Visits (Category 1 and 2) not involving high risk activities or environments

- Use ROVER Online or Day Visits Form (depending upon own school/establishment policy)
- Submit at least 2 weeks in advance of visit



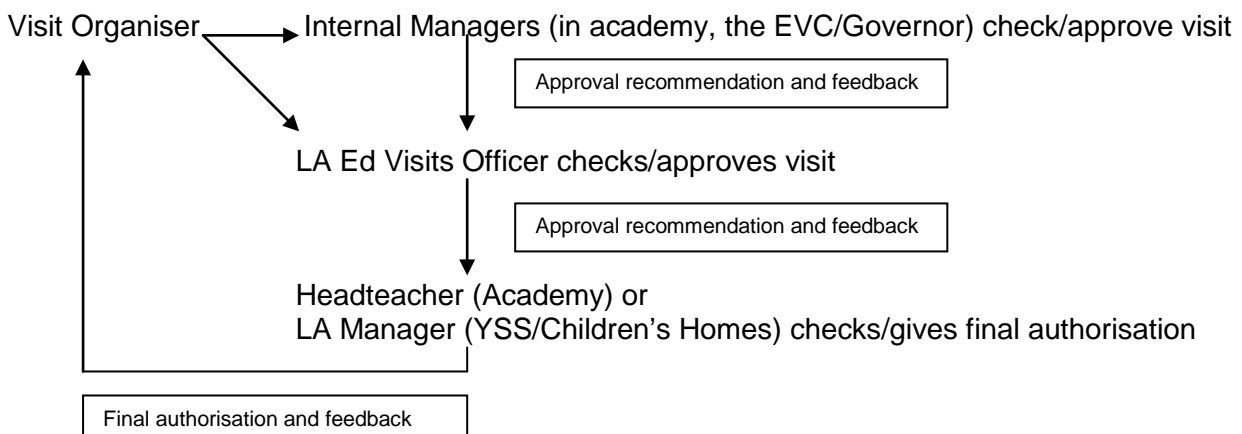
#### B. UK Residential (Category 3), Overseas (Category 4) and Visits involving High Risk Activities or Environments (Sub Category “A”) visits (In LA maintained schools/establishments only)

- Use ROVER Online only
- Submit at least 6 weeks in advance of visit



#### C. UK Residential (Category 3), Overseas (Category 4) and Visits involving High Risk Activities or Environments (Sub Category “A”) visits (Academies/Youth Support Services /Children’s Homes/other establishments)

- Use ROVER Online only
- Submit at least 6 weeks in advance of visit (submit Expeditions before financial commitment)



**17.1 Which visits need approval?**

- Details of all offsite visits need to be recorded, and then notified to and approved by the relevant authorities.
- No offsite visit should normally go ahead unless visit plans have been checked and clear approval has been given by all of the required authorised personnel, appropriate for each category of visit. When a visit is submitted for approval, each of the authorised personnel should check the details of the visit plans carefully to assess the safety and suitability of the visit.
- Each school/establishment's own Visits Policy should state clearly who is responsible and has authority internally to check and approve each category of visit.
- ROVER Online can be used to record and approve all visits. However, Category 1 and 2 (Day) visits do not necessarily need to be recorded on ROVER unless they involve significant hazardous activities/environments, as these visits are approved internally, and a paper-based system may be considered to be more appropriate and effective, depending upon the specific circumstances and needs of each establishment.

**17.2 How are “Day” visits (Category 1 and 2) approved?**

- Day Visits (Category 1 and 2) which do not involve “high risk activities and environments” (sub category “A”) require approval from internal managers only (school visits, for example, require final authorisation by the Headteacher, with additional approval by the EVC where appropriate). These visits can be recorded and approved using either ROVER Online or a paper-based system.
- Managers should therefore decide which system for approving day visits is most appropriate to their own circumstances, and should ensure that the required procedures are clearly stated within their own Offsite Visits policy, and that they are fully understood by all staff members.
- If using a paper-based system, a sample "Day Visits" form can be downloaded from the Educational Visits webpage at [www.eriding.net/Educational\\_visits](http://www.eriding.net/Educational_visits). Whilst it is acceptable to adapt this form or to use alternative versions, it is essential – whatever format is used - that managers obtain suitable and sufficient information and assurances about each visit to make an informed and reasonable judgement. In the event of a serious incident occurring during a visit, managers might be asked to justify why they have approved a visit, so careful consideration should be given as to what, and how much, information about a visit is requested, and what assurances need to be given by the Visit Organiser.
- The following 10 key questions should form at least the basis of checks on all visit arrangements, including day visits (as recommended by the HSE 2005 report into the Glenridding Beck fatal incident):
  - what are the main objectives of the visit?
  - what is “plan B” if the main objectives cannot be achieved?
  - what could go wrong? Does the risk assessment cover:
    - ✓ the main activity
    - ✓ travel arrangements
    - ✓ emergency procedures
    - ✓ staff numbers, gender and skill mixes
    - ✓ generic and site-specific hazards and risks
    - ✓ variable hazards (including environmental and participants' personal abilities and “cut-off” points)
  - what information will be provided for parents?
  - what consents will be sought?
  - what opportunities will parents have to ask questions?
  - what assurances are there of the leader(s)' competencies?
  - what are the communication arrangements?
  - what are the arrangements for supervision, both during activities and free time – is there a code of conduct?
  - what are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the activity?
- Category 1 (Frequently recurring/repeated) Day Visits do not normally need a new form for each separate occasion – one generic form should be adequate to cover all similar visits. The Visit Organiser needs to ensure that the Senior Manager/Headteacher is made fully aware of the

normal arrangements (and possible variations) for such visits, so that generic approval can be given.

#### 17.3 How are Category 3 (UK residential), 4 (overseas) and “A” (high risk) visits assessed and approved?

- All Category 3 (UK residential), 4 (overseas) and “A” (high risk) visits must be recorded on a ROVER form online by the Visit Organiser and then checked and approved online internally by the Senior Manager/Headteacher (or designated deputy) using ROVER.
- Other managers (for example, in schools, the EVC and Governor representative) will also normally need to assess and approve Cat 3, 4 and “A” visits using ROVER online, but hard copies can be used if preferred (ROVER forms can be printed out). In some cases, it may also be necessary to submit the form for approval to other Managers (for example, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Officer for DofE expeditions) or to the Headteachers/Managers of other schools/establishments (for example, when a visit involves young people from a number of different establishments).
- Once the visit has been checked internally, and given “In-House Approval” by the Senior Manager/Headteacher, the visit details are forwarded automatically to the Local Authority for final checking and authorisation by the relevant Local Authority Manager (the LA Educational Visits Officer for school visits).
- N.B. This process is different for Academies because the Headteacher (or designated deputy) has responsibility for the final authorisation of all the Academy’s visits. LA Approval is also still required for all Category 3, 4, and “A” visits, but should be requested at the same time as approval is requested from the EVC and Governors. Once “LA Approval” has been given, the form is forwarded automatically to the Headteacher for final authorisation (i.e. “In-House Approval”).

#### 17.4 What is the procedure for assessing and approving offsite visits using ROVER online?

- Once all the visit details and assurances have been recorded on ROVER, the Visit Organiser should:
  - go to ROVER section 17: “Seek visit approval”
  - click on “Printable version” (on the top menu bar) to view a full summary of the form;
  - check through the completed form to see if any questions have been left unanswered or “non-standard” answers have been given (these will be highlighted automatically by means of text colour changes)
  - complete and amend the form accordingly;
  - once satisfied that the form has been completed fully and accurately, send emails from section 17 to each of the required levels of management for checking and approval.
- Each manager can inspect the visit details by opening a weblink from the email that they receive, and then approve the visit (or not, as the case may be) and provide any feedback that they feel may be necessary.
- Senior Managers (Headteacher and/or EVC in schools) will also normally need to view and check hard copies of any accompanying documentation (e.g. risk assessments, copy of letters to parents etc.) to satisfy themselves that the visit plans are adequate.
- Final authority for authorising Category 1 and 2 Day Visits rests with the Senior Manager (normally the Headteacher in schools) and this is indicated by giving “In-House Approval”.
- It is recommended therefore that the Senior Manager/Headteacher should normally delay responding until after other managers have added their comments and feedback - however, this is at the Senior Manager/Headteacher’s discretion.
- Once the Senior Manager/Headteacher has responded to a Category 1 or 2 Day Visit, an email is automatically sent back to the Visit Organiser who submitted the form to inform them of the approval response and any additional comments or recommendations. The Visit Organiser can view the response of all managers by opening the weblink from the email.
- Final authority for authorising Category 3, 4, and “A” visits rests with the Local Authority (apart from Academies where the final authority for all visits rests with the Headteacher – see details above).

- The Local Authority is automatically notified online of a Category 3, 4 or “A” visit as soon as the visit is given “In-House Approval” by the Senior Manager/Headteacher.
- Once the relevant Local Authority officer has responded to a Category 3, 4 or “A” visit, an email is automatically sent back to the Visit Organiser who submitted the form to inform them of the approval decision and any additional comments or recommendations. The Visit Organiser can view the response of all managers by opening the weblink from the email.
- Managers should ensure that all new staff who will be involved in the leadership and management of offsite visits are suitably trained in the use of ROVER Online. Courses are made available by the Local Authority, but training can be delivered in-house by suitably experienced Educational Visits Coordinators.

#### **17.6 When should visit forms be submitted for checking and approval?**

- Visit forms must be submitted for approval early enough, in order that there is sufficient time available for:
  - all relevant arrangements to be made;
  - managers to give appropriate feedback;
  - Visit Organisers to respond, and to make any changes required, as a consequence of the feedback given, or if a visit is not approved.

#### **Category 1 and 2 (Day) Visits**

- Completed visit forms should be submitted for checking and approval as early as possible, preferably no later than 2 weeks before the planned visit.

#### **Category 3 (UK Residential), 4 (Overseas) and “A” (High Risk) Visits**

- Completed visit forms should be submitted for checking and approval as early as possible, preferably no later than 6 weeks before the planned visit.
- For visits involving significant financial commitment (e.g. commercially-led Overseas Expeditions) Visit Organisers should not make any firm bookings until they have at least received Outline Approval from the Senior Manager/Headteacher and the Local Authority – usually at least 6 months in advance. Once Outline Approval has been given, further details about the visit can be added, before submitting the form again to all the relevant managers for Final Approval at least 6 weeks before the visit.