

Chapter 18 - Visit approval status and feedback

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

- **Details of visits should be suitably recorded, and then notified to and approved by all relevant managers.**
- **Visit organisers should not undertake a visit until they are sure that the visit has been approved by all relevant managers, and that all issues of concern that have been raised by managers have been addressed satisfactorily.**
- **Day visits (involving low risk activities and environments) require final authorisation (“In-House Approval”) by the senior Manager/Headteacher.**
- **Residential and overseas visits, and all visits involving high risk activities or environments must be recorded on EVOLVE Online and require final authorisation (“LA Approval”) by the Local Authority (N.B All Academy visits require final authorisation by the senior Manager/Headteacher).**
- **Approval Responses**
 - “Not Approved” = significant changes needed
 - “Outline Approval” = basically OK but needs minor changes or more information
 - “In-House Approval” = approved by internal managers (final authorisation for academies)
 - “LA Approved” = approved by LA managers

18.1 What are the levels of visit approval status?Without using EVOLVE

- Category 1 and 2 (Day) Visits can be recorded and approved internally by the Senior Manager/Headteacher without using EVOLVE but there must be an agreed system for clearly stating the level of approval status, so that there can be no confusion as to the level of approval given.
- The terms “Not Approved”, “Outline Approval”, and “In-House Approval” (see below for definitions) should normally be given

Using EVOLVE

- Visits that are assessed and approved using EVOLVE can be allocated one of the following levels of approval status:

“Draft” - the visit details have been entered and temporarily saved. The draft form can be amended at any time before submission for approval.

“Submitted” - the visit details have been submitted (by email) to the relevant managers for assessment and approval. The form is locked and no further amendments can be made to the form at this stage. However, the visit leader can request managers to return the form so that changes can be made, and the form can then be resubmitted.

“Not Approved” - the visit plans are not acceptable and the visit will need to be cancelled or significantly amended and resubmitted. The Visit Organiser should consult with the relevant managers to consider options. If “Not Approved” is given, managers should state clearly why the visit plans are not acceptable and what amendments are necessary.

“Outline Approval” - the visit is basically sound in principle, but some minor amendments or additional information may be required. If this level of approval is given, the form is automatically “unlocked”, and it can be amended as required before resubmitting for final approval. If “Outline Approval” is given, managers should state clearly what amendments are necessary.

“In-House Approval” - the visit has been checked and given full approval internally by the Senior Manager/Headteacher. This level of approval gives final authorisation, for category 1 and 2 day visits. “In-House approval” is the first stage of approval required for Category 3, 4 and “A” visits, and once given, the form is automatically forwarded to the LA Manager for final authorisation (i.e. “LA Approval”). N.B. for Academies, the Headteacher – or designated deputy - has responsibility for the final authorisation (i.e. “In-House Approval”) of all visits;

“LA Approval” – the visit has been checked and given full approval and authorisation by the relevant Local Authority Manager. This is the second and final stage of approval required for Category 3, 4 and “A” visits. N.B. for Academies, the Headteacher – or designated deputy - has responsibility for the final authorisation of all visits. Once LA Approval has been given, the form is forwarded automatically to the Headteacher for final authorisation (i.e. “In-House Approval”).

18.2 Feedback regarding the planning and preparations for a visit

- It is important that each level of management is able to comment on and give appropriate feedback to the Visit Organiser regarding a proposed visit.
- Effective communication of specific concerns or advice is vital to the safe planning of visits.
- Each level of management should read through the visit details carefully, and give appropriate feedback to the Visit Organiser.
- The system should also allow for questions to be asked of the Visit Organiser.
- The EVOLVE online approval system enables feedback to be given to the Visit Organiser by all levels of management, and for each person’s comments to be viewed by all those involved.

- Managers can give additional comments and advice using alternative means (e.g. email), but it is recommended that a written record of this is kept.
- The Visit Organiser is responsible for checking the EVOLVE (or Day Visit) form before departure to ensure that the visit has been authorised and approved by all the relevant managers, and that all feedback comments have been noted and responded to, if necessary. The Visit Organiser will normally receive notification of the visit's approval and any relevant feedback via an email that is automatically sent to them following final authorisation. If this email does not arrive for any reason, the Visit Organiser must nonetheless check before departure on EVOLVE that the visit has been correctly approved and authorised by all the relevant managers, and that all necessary action has been taken in response to the feedback given.
- If there are significant concerns expressed about the visit, the concerned manager should only recommend "Outline Approval" and return the form to the Visit Organiser. If "Outline Approval" is given, the form will revert back to its unlocked status, and it should be amended as required by the Visit Organiser before resubmitting it for final approval.