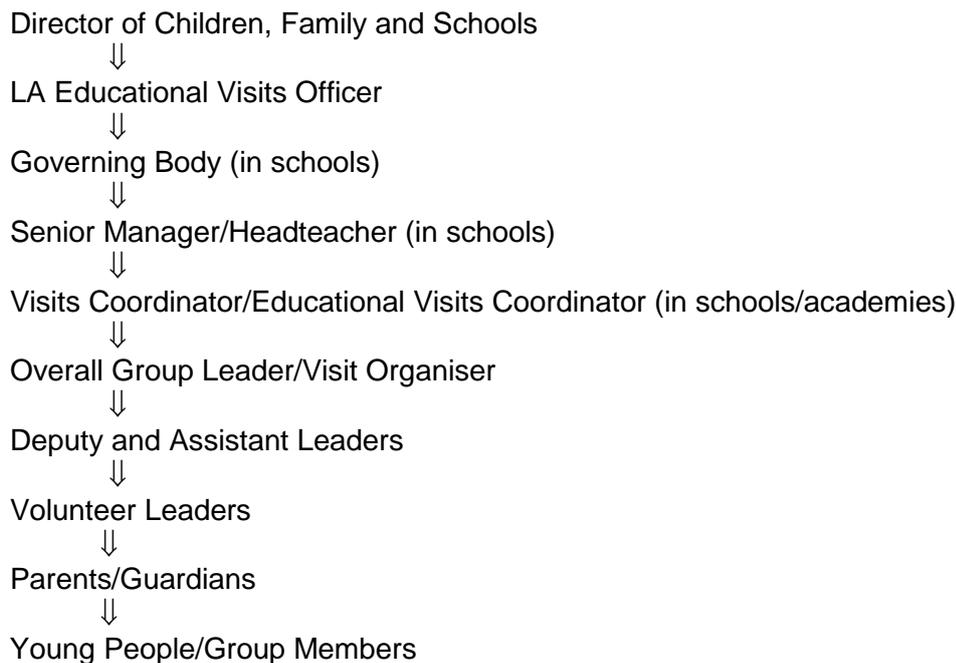


4. Management roles and responsibilities – an overview

- 4.1 In Health and Safety Law, the organisation carrying the role of “employer” has the ultimate responsibility. However, in practice individual people or groups can be given authority to act on behalf of the parent organisation. For the specific terms of reference they are given and agree to, individuals themselves can then be held accountable. All those involved in overseeing, approving, organising and leading educational/offsite visits should acknowledge that they have certain responsibilities, and are accountable for their actions/decisions.
- 4.2 Serious accidents on educational/offsite visits are very rare, but they do occasionally happen (indeed, it must be understood and acknowledged that some accidents might still occur, whatever precautions are taken!!). Some accidents occur as a consequence of unforeseeable circumstances beyond anyone’s reasonable control. Other accidents might be preventable, but they seldom result purely from the neglect of a leader’s duty of care – more often, they can be attributed to failures within the planning, checking and approval process. It is important therefore for all those involved to be clearly aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- 4.3 A simple hierarchy of management that can oversee, monitor and check the actions/decisions of others is a helpful and effective means of assessing, maintaining and promoting safety standards. The hierarchy of management responsibilities should be clearly stated within each service/establishment’s own Visits Policy. For example, within the LA’s maintained schools and services, the following tiers of management are responsible for establishing and maintaining safe practice during the planning and leading of educational/offsite visits:



This safety management model is most effective when each of the groups and individuals take some responsibility for overseeing and cross-checking the actions/decisions of others in the chain of accountability. The “ROVER online” system for the notification and approval of visits is a valuable tool, as it allows the plans for proposed visits to be easily communicated and checked, and feedback to be given by managers. However, whilst such systems might help to promote safe practice, they cannot guarantee it. Each tier of management should prioritise the provision of appropriate training, advice and guidance in order to establish a high level of competence, and a positive, supportive atmosphere in which all those involved can feel confidence and reassurance.

The following sections outline the main roles and responsibilities of each individual involved, but it should be remembered that the success and safety of a visit is dependent on coordinated teamwork. It should be a key responsibility of management to see that the roles of all those involved link together effectively.