

Proposed Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill

Introduction

A proposal for a Bill to ensure that young people have the opportunity to experience residential outdoor education.

The consultation runs from 29 April 2022 to 22 July 2022

All those wishing to respond to the consultation are strongly encouraged to enter their responses electronically through this survey. This makes collation of responses much simpler and quicker. However, the option also exists of sending in a separate response (in hard copy or by other electronic means such as e-mail), and details of how to do so are included in the member's consultation document.

Questions marked with an asterisk (*) require an answer.

All responses must include a name and contact details. Names will only be published if you give us permission, and contact details are never published – but we may use them to contact you if there is a query about your response. If you do not include a name and/or contact details, we may have to disregard your response.

Please note that you must complete the survey in order for your response to be accepted. If you don't wish to complete the survey in a single session, you can choose "Save and Continue later" at any point. Whilst you have the option to skip particular questions, you must continue to the end of the survey and press "Submit" to have your response fully recorded.

Please ensure you have read the consultation document before responding to any of the questions that follow. In particular, you should read the information contained in the document about how your response will be handled. The consultation document is available here:

[Consultation Document](#)

[Privacy Notice](#)

I confirm that I have read and understood the Privacy Notice which explains how my personal data will be used.

On the previous page we asked you if you are UNDER 12 YEARS old, and you responded Yes to this question.

If this is the case, we will have to contact your parent or guardian for consent.

If you are under 12 years of age, please put your contact details into the textbox. This can be your email address or phone number. We will then contact you and your parents to receive consent.

Otherwise please confirm that you are or are not under 12 years old.

No Response

About you

Please choose whether you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation.
Note: If you choose "individual" and consent to have the response published, it will appear under your own name. If you choose "on behalf of an organisation" and consent to have the response published, it will be published under the organisation's name.

an individual

Which of the following best describes you? (If you are a professional or academic, but not in a subject relevant to the consultation, please choose "Member of the public".)

Teacher/school employee

Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what expertise or experience you have that is relevant to the subject-matter of the consultation

Primary school teacher with specific interests in outdoor education, as well as a wealth of experience volunteering in the outdoors for the Scout Association and other non-profit organisations.

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

No Response

Please choose one of the following:

I am content for this response to be published and attributed to me or my organisation

Please provide your Full Name or the name of your organisation. (Only give the name of your organisation if you are submitting a response on its behalf).
(Note: the name will not be published if you have asked for the response to be anonymous or "not for publication". Otherwise this is the name that will be published with your response).

Euan James Thomson

Please provide details of a way in which we can contact you if there are queries regarding your response. Email is preferred but you can also provide a postal address or phone number.

We will not publish these details.

Aim and approach - Note: All answers to the questions in this section may be published (unless your response is "not for publication").

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed Bill? (Please note that this question is compulsory.)

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Outdoor experiences are proven to increase resilience, empathy, cooperation skills and a desire to create a more sustainable world. This is underpinned by research as well as my own experiences. Though most schools do a one-off residential for upper school children, I believe that introducing these as early as Primary 3 or 4 would have a much longer term impact on individuals and society.

Q2. Do you think legislation is required, or are there other ways in which the proposed Bill's aims could be achieved more effectively? Please explain the reasons for your response.

Given that the UNCRC already makes provisions for childrens' right to rest, leisure and play, it could be argued that this is already legislated for, however a specific Bill which outlines the type of and duration of experience would remove ambiguity - absolute clarity of national expectations is always seen a positive thing among teachers and school staff.

Q3. The proposed Bill will cover residential outdoor education provision for local authority and grant-aided schools only. Which of the following best expresses your view that independent schools or any other education establishments should not be covered by this obligation.

Neutral (neither support nor oppose)

Please give reasons for your response.

Through my work as a volunteer, I have seen the level of provision already in place among independent schools (who already benefited from their status as registered charity). If we were to consider this to be legislation aiming for equity as opposed to equality of opportunity, then I don't believe it necessary to include non-state schools, though equally I am not opposed to the idea.

Q4. The intention is that the obligation to ensure that residential outdoor education is provided would fall on those who are responsible for arranging the provision, e.g. education authorities and managers of grant-aided schools. Which of the following best expresses your view of this proposal?

Neutral (neither support nor oppose)

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Provided there is a quality rubric to follow at a national level, given that there is often reluctance and anxiety among school staff where outdoor education is concerned, then I don't believe that the party responsible for organising such experiences, whoever that may be, should be a reason that this bill does not pass.

Funding

Q5. Which of the following best expresses your view of how residential outdoor education experiences should be funded?

By parents/carers, with costs being covered by public funding where children meet criteria for financial support (e.g entitlement to free school meals)

Please explain the reasons for your response. (If you consider Scottish Government funding should be provided to local authorities, please set out the mechanism for such funding, for example through block grant, ring fenced funding etc.)

I believe that parents and carers should be responsible where possible - as with most educational excursions - however the criteria may need to be widened beyond purely those eligible for free school meals, particularly if we are to consider the fact that some families may have more than one child eligible for these experiences simultaneously which could be a burden to even families above the free school meals threshold, especially given the current cost of living crisis.

Financial Implications

Q6. Any new law can have a financial impact which would affect individuals, businesses, the public sector, or others. What financial impact do you think this proposal could have if it became law?

some increase in costs

Please explain the reasons for your answer, including who you would expect to feel the financial impact of the proposal, and if there are any ways you think the proposal could be delivered more cost-effectively.

These things ultimately always have an associated cost, however I believe that the potential benefits outweigh any financial drawbacks. Schools may also wish to fundraise themselves for such experiences, which gives the children further real world experiences pertaining to the world of work.

Standard/ Quality of provision

Q7. Which of the following best expresses your view on the proposal for a quality framework to ensure the quality of the education provision of outdoor centres?

Fully supportive

Please give reasons for your response, including whether this should be done by HMIE using a quality framework as part of their inspection of schools and the extent to which, if any, it should be statutory.

I believe that there should be a regulator of these centres, however there is no guarantee that the necessary expertise currently lie with HMIE. Local authorities tend to have outdoor education specialists based centrally who often mode best practice to interested teachers council-wide. A network of these practitioners would be a far more effective method by which to standardise and moderate the quality of outdoor experiences.

Q8. Which of the following best expresses your view that the age range of 12 – 16 is appropriate for participation in the residential outdoor education experience?

Fully opposed

Please give reasons for your response, including whether you think other age ranges would be more appropriate.

I believe that these should begin as early as possible, ideally while children are in first, or early second, level. Through my voluntary work I have seen children as young as 8 camping, cooking on a fire and engaging in highly adventurous activities. They learn to measure risk, cooperate and communicate in ways that are just not achievable in a 6 hour school day.

Equalities

Q9. Any new law can have an impact on different individuals in society, for example as a result of their age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

What impact could this proposal have on particular people if it became law? If you do not have a view skip to next question.

Please explain the reasons for your answer and if there are any ways you think the proposal could avoid negative impacts on particular people.

There are always going to be elements with any residential experience which need to be handled with sensitivity and care. Giving schools and local authorities the ability to make reasonable adjustments on a case by case basis is easily the most effective tool in ensuring these experiences remain inclusive for all.

Q10. How might equity of provision for all be ensured, regardless of socio-economic status? Please give reasons for your response.

See previous answer regarding need for a means test which goes beyond free school meal eligibility

Sustainability

Q11. Any new law can impact on work to protect and enhance the environment, achieve a sustainable economy, and create a strong, healthy, and just society for future generations.

Do you think the proposal could impact in any of these areas? [If you do not have a view then skip to next question]

Please explain the reasons for your answer, including what you think the impact of the proposal could be, and if there are any ways you think the proposal could avoid negative impacts?

Having recently delivered the John Muir Award, as well as attended a P7 residential at Benmore Outdoor Centre, I have seen first hand the increase in awareness of the human impact on the environment. By giving them these experiences, young people are more likely to consider the impact of individual and societal actions with regards to their environmental impact.

General

Q12. Do you have any other additional comments or suggestions on the proposed Bill (which have not already been covered in any of your responses to earlier questions)?

Please consider extending this across the entire education sector and not merely to children of secondary school age. These experiences will have a greater impact on children if they can take place in formative years.