

# 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".)

Professional with experience in a relevant subject

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

I am a retired education consultant specialising in outdoor learning and play. My professional experience covers working in an urban environmental education centre in Philadelphia, as a seasonal countryside ranger, in a residential outdoor education centre in Ontario, being a primary teacher and headteacher (3 positions from 1998-2007). I have written or contributed to many outdoor learning national documents since 2010 including OL practical guidance for teachers, Building your curriculum outside and in, The Play Strategy, Loose Parts Play: A Toolkit, Out to Play and most recently Caring for our Outdoor Spaces (to be published this year).

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).

Juliet Robertson

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.)

Partially supportive

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

I believe that all children throughout their formal education should be entitled to an annual residential from 5-18yrs. This Bill is a step in the right direction. For children from the poorest backgrounds this may be their only opportunity to leave their neighbourhood and experience the wider world and the possibilities that exist for them in the present and in the future. It gives them an opportunity to establish or deepen positive relationships with other children and young people (CYP) and adults. This is made on the assumption that the residential experience is of the highest quality, embedded into the life, work and curriculum for the school and not "Blackpool in the Woods" aka a holiday during school time. I have witnessed many of these "residentials" hence I have lots of reservations.

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.

Yes I feel that legislation is required. The decline in outdoor residential provision in Scotland since the Eighties is unacceptable for a wealthy country such as Scotland. However to pull out one week in secondary without conditions attached to how this week is mediated and the progression of residential experiences through out the school life of a child/young person from 5-18 is of concern. The legislation needs to be sufficiently rigorous to ensure this residential is part of a totality of outdoor learning experiences and not an isolated one off. Given that Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning has been in place since 2012, the question has to be asked why secondary schools have not recognised and embedded this within their curriculum (during as well as out-of-hours). To do this, support and funding needs to be put not just into residential outdoor centres but to conduct a review and action plan/recommendations to ensure 1. Outdoor learning as part of Learning for Sustainability is a core taught part of Initial Teacher Education. 2. That the teaching profession is funded and supported to attend high quality outdoor learning as part of Learning for Sustainability professional development - ideally this should also include residentials for teaching staff. 3. That Education Scotland and Scottish Government and HMI actively demonstrate recognition and value of outdoor learning for all CYP attainment and achievement. At present, my experience has been this is lip-service. It simply isn't good enough given the environmental and climate crises we currently face and the skillset and knowledge our CYP need to live in this fast-changing world.

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.**

Independent schools can include the cost of a residential in their fees. Almost all have charitable status and are able to apply for other funding streams.

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.**

I do not know SAPOE's perspective on this and would value their perspective. My concern is that many

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?

local authorities have outsourced or downsized or removed their outdoor education services. Many simply focus on approving school excursions - visits advisors. Also how do we ensure that with the tight LA budgets and pressures, the outdoor residential pot is robbed by Peter to pay Paul? This consistently happens with new school builds where the budget set aside for the new school grounds is used to make up the overspend on buildings works, so schools are left (yet again) with asphalt and a MUGA all weather pitch which, again, simply isn't good enough. What provision would be included in the Bill to ensure the ring-fencing of budget for outdoor learning that includes the residential?

## Funding

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

In full by the Scottish Government

**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 don't feel particularly well qualified to comment and again would defer to SAPOE. This is an experiment and by having central funding, it is also easier to allocate resourcing to research, training, support materials for all schools to access so that we develop a shared national understanding of what a high quality residential experience can be that further develops the good start made by the Brilliant Residentials Project. Then it is possible to explore a fuller range of models and pricing and creative, sustainable approaches to residentials.

For example, in the Canadian outdoor centre where I worked, 2 out of the 5 educators were education or OE students who were mentored by the 3 qualified teachers during the course of the year. This included developing the provision and action based research so they left a positive legacy of their time at the centre as well as learning what excellent residential provision was like. All teachers who came with their class had to also develop their outdoor expertise by leading or being supported to lead one of the 6 chosen experiences during the week, e.g. orienteering, outdoor art, pond studies, etc. So the teachers were actively involved both in the delivery and wider experience (and also got time off during the week in lieu of this). Thus, systems can be put in place to make this cost effective and high quality and to embed professional development. It is also of paramount importance that residential centres are supported to develop robust financial and operating systems that make their set-ups financially and environmentally sustainable. They all need to be resilient enough to survive another Covid pandemic or similar unforeseen future events.

## 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?

no overall change 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.**

I think we can always argue for more money but I'd like to see a redistribution of what is currently available

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?

within education to support this. Does Scotland as a nation value outdoor learning and learning for sustainability to fully invest in both residential and non-residential experiences, school grounds and local greenspace? At the moment, the evidence seems that LAs and nationally value the outdoors and outdoor play in ELC and OOSC but not elsewhere in the system. I know from my own work spanning 5 decades, the impact of outdoor learning across the curriculum, the health and wellbeing benefits and so on. This is now backed up by more and more research supporting this (or at least the effect appears to be neutral in some instances, but rarely negative). However it is recognised within the outdoor and education sectors that more high quality research is needed - See Higgins and Christie (2020) <https://www.gov.scot/publications/educational-outcomes-learning-sustainability-brief-review-literature/> . At some point I do feel there has to be an onus on residential centres to prove they are financially, socially and environmentally sustainable. A very good model here comes from the Czech Republic - Kapráluv mlýn Scout Environmental Education Centre. Under the directorship of Michal Medek, this residential capitalised on volunteers, put in place renewable energy measures that resulted the bare minimum being spent on energy bills, offered a range of accommodation options from camping to double rooms and created a contingency fund to survive unforeseeable events such as Covid 19 pandemic. Do Scotland's residential centres have the capacity to be this creative? Can the Scottish Govt support the residential centres to be creative in all aspects of sustainability?

If Scotland's education system wholeheartedly recognises the benefits of outdoor learning and creates an equitable system of outdoor learning opportunities then this could go a significant way towards closing perceived gaps in attainment, improving the health and well-being of CYP, tackling the environmental and climate issues. The recent Muir report recognises the value of outdoor learning - see pages 15, 18 and 19. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/putting-learners-centre-towards-future-vision-scottish-education/documents/> and so it's time to really make the most of the benefits of high quality outdoor learning in all sectors, levels and areas of education. Importantly, most CYP themselves consistently tell adults when asked that they enjoy and want more outdoor experiences. Why are the voices of our learners being ignored on this matter?

## 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?

Neutral (neither support nor oppose)

**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.**

My current concern is the limited understanding of high quality outdoor learning and education provision that exists both within HMIE and across Scotland. I think a consultative approach is needed based upon partnerships and that includes the perspective of children and young people. Very often it is too small a group of people that is consulted, thus - like this draft proposal - the net needs to be flung wide and deep.

For example, one issue that arose around residential during my time was that of the 35 working week and the time the visiting teacher spent being on duty. So early involvement of unions may be prudent for issues like this before a framework creates another challenge to overcome.

Also we have to be mindful that evidence is largely what you see in practice. It matters diddly squat the paperwork, if the practice itself isn't excellent. Is it possible to move away from or reduce paperwork as evidence here? Also what needs to be in place which isn't already in place? There's no point in reinventing the wheel. For example we know that high quality feedback between teachers and learners is highly effective and low cost. So what does this look like in an outdoor residential context?

What are the routines in place that support the totality of learning outwith the designated activities? For example, meal times play a huge role in the hidden messages. Again, when I worked in a residential centre, the children all had to take turns in feeding the farm animals. The eggs from the chickens, the beef

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?

in the mince and so on, came from the animals on the centre's small farm. The children also helped grow some of the vegetables, looked after the bees, tapped the maple bush trees to make maple syrup and so on. So the children were eating what they helped nurture and care for. This was normal and part of the everyday routines within the residential centre.

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?

Partially supportive

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

I totally accept it is not currently feasible but we should be working toward a progression of planned residential experiences across 5-18 age range. Also I feel that there has been an ongoing undervaluing of all forms of outdoor learning within the primary and secondary sectors. To isolate residential from the totality of outdoor learning experiences our children and young people are entitled to seems strange. It would be good to see HMIE, Education Scotland, the Scottish Government and other national policy-makers to truly value the outdoors, especially as this is the only way LfS can effectively become a reality. At the moment, the default message is that real learning happens indoors and the outdoors is a "jazz hands" option. Our learners tell us otherwise. Our educators who have stepped out of the classroom tell us otherwise. Research tells us otherwise. Why is outdoor learning in all its forms still viewed as a "choice" and not a fundamental right and necessity to meet the needs of many of our learners? I have not referenced specific research as I am presuming that Pete Higgins, Greg Mannion and other academics will supply this to this draft proposal.

## 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.

This Bill does run the risk of inadvertently excluding those learners who are most vulnerable. There needs to be a clause which ensures the entitlement of all, and the quality framework must report on this. I am particularly concerned about children who are deemed badly behaved or who have severe and profound multiple learning needs. Every effort will need to be made to ensure any marginalised group or learner has equity of access and opportunity. This may involve some creative thinking. For example support to residential centres may be needed to create gender neutral toilets and showering arrangements, flexibility of sleeping options and so on. Is it worth considering family-friendly residential for some groups? Are nurture-group type residential an option? Can residential be provided close at hand? For example, does a Glasgow school really need to go to the Highland but are there centres locally that can be used? In Canada, we tried to avoid bookings from schools with Muslim students during Ramadan and Eid. With students with multiple allergies, the cook had direct conversations with the child and parent/carer in advance of coming with meal planners and ingredients sent in advance alongside double checking at every meal that every item was safe to eat. Time for outdoor play was set aside every day in an agreed space so the children had time simply to "be" without having adult directed activities or jobs to do. This is a far reaching consideration.

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

To make it free and inclusive for all children and young people.

## 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?

1. To facilitate outdoor residential experiences on-site, within walking, a public transport journey or short bus journey away from the school. Funding should not be given for overseas residential or those which are too far away.
2. As previously described, volunteering opportunities need to be established. The EU offer volunteering experiences whereby young people are offered full-board plus a weekly stipend for their volunteering to gain experiences. The Saltire Awards and DoE could be part of this offer. In the US, the Peace Corps offer voluntary experience in exchange for grants to subsidise higher education for students prior to attendance at college.
3. Residential centres should be given funding/support to make their centres environmentally and financially resilient. This could be in partnership with local authorities. For example, an LA run outdoor centre that has heat efficiency measures put in place (which could be part of the on-site learning experience) will pass the energy savings back to their LA.
4. Student placements could be part of the requirement of both residential and ITE to work together in partnership. See previous comments.

## 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 do not consider a one-off week long residential in secondary school in isolation and out of context. It must be embedded. The financing of such a bill must take into account the wider need within education for greater understanding and embedding of outdoor learning for all CYP at all ages.

Thank you for creating a form that is easy to move between pages and which doesn't erase comments when this happens.

All the best with this Bill.