

POE19 Individual

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Bil arfaethedig – Bil Addysg Awyr Agored (Cymru) | Proposed Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill

Ymateb gan Individual | Evidence from Individual

In what capacity are you responding: Headteacher

Your opinion

How important is outdoor education to children and young people's overall education and development?

Quite important

What are the main benefits to children and young people from having a residential outdoor education experience?

Should children and young people have a guaranteed opportunity to participate in a residential outdoor education experience, at some stage during their school years, if they wish to?

No

Should an opportunity to participate in a residential outdoor education experience, at some stage during their school years, be free of charge on one occasion to pupils?

No

What are the main barriers which you believe currently exist to children and young people accessing residential outdoor education experiences?

Financial constraints;Parental anxiety / uncertainty;Child anxiety / uncertainty;

Equality Considerations: Could the proposed Bill have any positive impacts on some children and young people in particular? If so, who and why?

Equality Considerations: Could the proposed Bill have any negative impacts on some children and young people in particular. If so, who and why? What could this Bill do to mitigate any negative impacts?

What age do you believe is most suitable for children and young people to be offered an opportunity to undertake a residential outdoor education experience?

Year 6 (age 10-11)

Is four nights/five days the best length for a residential outdoor experience?

No

Please explain your answer and highlight any possible implications from having a standard approach of four night/five day experiences (whether positive or negative).

Expectation for staffing. Impact on schools

Do you agree there is a need for legislation to ensure all children and young people are given an opportunity to access a residential outdoor education experience, at some stage during their school years?

Strongly disagree

Is there anything else you would like to say about this proposal?

There is much that I would like to say – much as the ambition behind the legislation is worthy, practically, in the climate that we are experiencing financially, it is a non starter. The money that this would cost could be better spent by headteachers / local authorities on improving the experience that pupils have when in the schools they are in daily, i.e the school estate and indeed on the outdoor environments which surround schools; provision within the classrooms and adults with which to deliver it.

Not only this, even if money were no object, logistically, schools cannot be responsible for another thing. Logistics around:

Finding staff to volunteer to take the significant responsibility of acting in loco parentis after school hours

The additional funding of supply teachers to cover teachers / TAs who are willing

The cost to the education of others left behind whose teachers are on the residential

The increased burden upon headteachers / senior leaders.

Is there enough resource and capacity in the system in order to enable all schools to take part?

In my view, compelling local authorities to make this provision adds an increased burden to a system which is already struggling to make adequate provision due to cost pressures, projects driven by political horse trading. The proposal as a universal provision, whilst laudable in its aims, is unsustainable and unrealistic.