

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Bil arfaethedig – Bil Addysg Awyr Agored (Cymru) - Ymgynghoriad ar gyfer plant a phobl ifanc | Proposed Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill – Children and young person's consultation

Ymateb gan Cardiff University, | Evidence from Cardiff University

Capacity of response: Organisation currently providing outdoor education

Your opinion

What are the main good things for children about having an overnight outdoor education visit?

Outdoor residential learning experiences provide a vast array of benefits to young learners. Evidence from the literature suggests that outdoor residential learning improves learners' physical, mental and emotional health, as well as providing opportunities to develop their social skills. Equally important, these experiences can engender positive perspectives towards, and associations with, the more-than-human world. Additionally, these kinds of experiences can accommodate diverse, pedagogical perspectives that can enrich the learning experiences of learners and educators alike. For example, pedagogical approaches such as nature pedagogy, draw on philosophical perspectives such as John Dewey's theory of experience, Miller's theories on holistic education, Buber's "I and Thou" relationship and the Norwegian concept of Friluftsliv or 'outdoor life.' Perhaps the most pertinent benefit of these kinds of experiences is that they can enable the inclusion of information, knowledge, experiences and perspectives on our climate crisis into school curricula and can support educators and learners in developing a sense of stewardship for Earth and its inhabitants, and can frame approaches to solving our climate crisis in discourses of radical love and hope for life on Earth and its future.

What gets in the way of children taking part in overnight outdoor education visits?

Cost; An over-emphasis on cognition rather than experiential perspectives on learning. Too often, experiential learning is reduced to a kind of 'less powerful' knowledge - as if 'experience' is simply the mental residual of practical undertakings.

How can people make sure children have the best possible time at overnight outdoor education visits?

A good starting point is to simply think about the following three criteria: How can we ensure young people are safe, healthy and happy throughout these experiences? Then, drawing on evidence from educational research on outdoor residential learning activities, the expertise of educational researchers and the professional knowledge of teachers in devising an approach to outdoor learning grounded in a Welsh context and perspective.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is it for all children have the chance to do a free overnight outdoor education visits at some time?

10

What is the best age or year to go

This all depends on what educational aims are at play and what methods are used to achieve them.

How long should the trip be for?

This all depends on what educational aims are at play and what methods are used to achieve them.

Which groups of children would get the most out of taking part in an overnight outdoor education visit, and why?

This is a difficult question to answer because of a number of factors, however, one response might be the following:

- Children from urban areas often have limited access to green spaces and aren't provided opportunities to recognise their relationship to nature. These young people can benefit from these experiences by developing a deeper connection to the natural world and understanding their role as a human being that is also part of nature.
- Children with learning disabilities (of any type) can benefit from these kinds of activities because they encourage different approaches to learning that aren't often possible in a typical school setting. For example, for children with physical challenges to motor-skills, they can benefit from the on-hands learning and experiences often found in outdoor learning experiences.
- Children from disadvantaged areas also often have limited access to green spaces and the 'natural world.' These kinds of experiences offered by schools can provide children with these opportunities that they might not normally experience.

Should it be a law that children can go on at least one free overnight outdoor education visit?

Yes

Please tell us any other ideas that should be in the new law

I would rather read the current information included in the law than to offer suggestions without reading it first.

I'm more than happy to have conversations about outdoor learning and residential learning for young people in Wales.