



**Snowdonia-
Active**
Eryri-
Bywiol

Dear [insert]

Save Outdoor Education – Support needed urgently

The school travel sector is facing an existential threat. Outdoor education is a vital part of the British education system. Without it schools, children and communities will permanently lose important, formative educational experiences and assets. While the Government continues to advise against overnight educational visits the future of outdoor education - a great British tradition - is at risk. The delays in reopening the sector to-date have had a significant and long-lasting social and financial impact through lost jobs, permanent site closures and missed educational experiences for thousands of young people across the UK.

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Outdoor residential centres are not economically viable on day trips alone; allowing residential trips reopening is the only way to save the sector. We cannot warn the Government in strong enough terms that any decision to prevent residential trips for the rest of the academic year, without support, will permanently close the whole sector.

We strongly believe it is possible for residential centres to meet and exceed Covid-safe standards. It seems totally illogical for centres to remain closed when schools are open and successfully operating under the 'school bubble' construct; as well as boarding schools, hostels and hotels continuing to operate. To date, despite tireless work from the sector, we have received disappointing engagement with the Department for Education, resulting in no change to guidance.

As a local MP for [insert], we are urgently seeking your support for a November review of COVID-safe health and safety guidance for residential school trips and for a roadmap for the phased return of school trips by the Spring term, allowing children, schools and parents across the UK access to valuable outdoor education.

We urge you to do this through any representation you can make to the Department of Education via a letter, parliamentary question or written question. We are seeking the support of both AMs and MPs in this matter because many Welsh outdoor centres are owned and operated by English Local Authorities and many more are dependent on visits by English schools.

I am sure you are well aware of the importance of the outdoor education sector to the economy of North Wales and the important role it plays in the future health and well-being of UK children. The sector is a vital part of education in the UK, with over 95% of Primary Schools offering at least one residential experience per year and over 2 million young people taking part in a wide range of residential experiences both at home and abroad (2019). Residential outdoor trips are often the only experience a young person will have of the great British countryside, these trips help to foster care for the environment, offer a space away from home to develop confidence and a safe place to discover and learn about themselves, build relationships with others and develop their education.

Nearly 3000 jobs have already been lost and many outdoor education facilities have permanently closed as over £500m of revenue has been lost. The recent decision not to review the guidance will cost a further 3,000 jobs before the new year. If there is no change before the Spring term half of outdoor education capacity will be lost permanently alongside over 15,000 jobs.

This is urgent; please act now to help save our outdoor education sector.

With thanks



Catherine Williams
Operations Manager
Eryri-Bywiol/ Snowdonia-Active

On behalf of Snowdonia-Active board of Directors:

Ray Wood - Chairman, Adventure photographer and writer

Mark Lynden - Founder of Snowdonia-Active

Eluned Roberts - Owner ER Outdoors Former Head of Llanrug Outdoor Education Centre

Graham Burns - Head of Lledr Hall Outdoor Education Centre

Andy Newton - Mountain Training UK trainer and assessor

Ric Potter - British Mountain Guide

Gordon Neil - Owner Bach Ventures outdoor pursuits and bunk house