

## POE99 Forest School

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Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

[Bil arfaethedig – Bil Addysg Awyr Agored \(Cymru\) | Proposed Outdoor Education \(Wales\) Bill](#)

Ymateb gan Ysgol Goedwig, | Evidence from Forest School,

Are you (your organisation) currently a provider of outdoor education?: No

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### Your opinion

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

Very important

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

Outdoor education and outdoor pursuits gives young people life skills, confidence and leadership skills that they can draw upon for the rest of their lives. I have seen this from personal experience where my first job over 35 years ago was as an outdoor instructor. I would see quiet introverted young people arrive at the beginning of a week on a Monday to then be exposed to pursuits such as caving, rock climbing and abseiling to leave on a Friday brimming with confidence. This was inspiring to see.

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?

Yes

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?

Yes

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

Financial constraints;Patental 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?

Yes the bill would ensure that all children have the opportunity to attend a residential outdoor experience. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds or ones who struggle in a normal classroom setting often flourish in the outdoors or involved in practically based activities.

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?

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To make residential outdoor education available to all the negative impact may be that some children would not want to attend for a variety of reasons. e.g. dislike of the outdoors, being outside of comfort zones, child and parental anxiety of children going away.

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?

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Year 6 (age 10-11)

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

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Yes

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

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Life is all about experiences. In my own experience of working with children on residential courses. Children may arrive with doubts of their abilities on a Monday but five days of experiences that are not used too and takes them out of their comfort zone. The child leaves on a Friday a stronger, confident and more resilient. This is from the activities that they take part in but also from staying away from home with their peers which is often the first time they have been away from home on their own.

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?

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Strongly agree

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

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I would fully support the outdoor education bill in Wales. Having worked in the outdoor education 35 years ago and then spending 30 years in the police force. I am very confident that this sort of education has a positive and lasting effect on young persons. It can shape the person they are to become and also the career they may wish to follow. Several English local authorities still invest in their outdoor centres that they have here in Wales in places like the Brecon Beacons, Gower and Pembrokeshire. They can see the positive effect that this has on their young persons.

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