

Open Letter to the Prime Minister

Saving Outdoor Education

Dear Prime Minister,

Children and young people have been among those most impacted by the COVID pandemic. All have missed vital school hours and valuable time with friends, while being confined to their houses with limited access to the outdoors and the life enhancing experiences it can bring.

With over two million children a year taking part in outdoor education, the benefits to health and wellbeing and to socio-emotional learning outcomes (including self-confidence, teamwork and resilience) have been well-evidenced. This is particularly true for disadvantaged children and the thousands of inner-city schools for whom outdoor education is often a unique experience.

As we recover from this pandemic, we need to help children across the UK regain these valuable learning experiences and outdoor education has a unique role to play in helping to restore and rebuild their confidence and mental health.

However, the pandemic has been catastrophic for outdoor education and, unless urgent action is taken, the sector will be decimated, with £600m of sector revenue already lost, resulting in 6,000 jobs gone and a further 10,000 jobs at risk.

We can still save this valuable sector, activate its huge resources to play a role in schoolchildren's recovery from the pandemic, and protect its vital educational experiences for future generations.

To do that, outdoor education has to be part of the Government's wider restarting of education, with both day and overnight visits allowed to operate from the Summer Term.

Yours sincerely,