



Save Outdoor Education

Public Health England Advice – Sector Rebuttal

Overview

The sector is safe to operate and provide residential. We have seen no science or evidence to the contrary. The areas highlighted by PHE are plainly contradictory and would prohibit a wide range of other activities for many sectors beyond residential visits, including day camps and boarding schools, which remain open. We can work with PHE to address these areas of concern and further develop our COVID-safe protocols for a safe restart of the sector.

PHE Risks and Rebuttal

1. increased social interaction of groups of children and adults outside of their established bubbles;

- School bubbling is central to the Outdoor education COVID-safe protocols (attached)
- All our procedures are focussed on delivering high hygiene levels and keeping schools apart
- Outdoor Education centres are set up to maintain school bubbling. On the usually expansive sites, schools will be kept separate with appropriately segregated accommodation, strict hygiene measures, social distancing one way systems, staggered arrival and staggered dining amongst other measures
- In many ways, there is less mixing beyond school bubbles than would occur during a normal school week

2. increased contact time with others in an indoor setting;

- Outdoor education centres are predominantly for outdoor activities
- Whilst on site, students would spend more time outdoors, in their school bubbles, than during any other school week
- High hygiene levels and social distancing protocols are met and exceeded on site, when students are both indoors and outdoors

3. sharing bedroom facilities;

- Students remain within their school bubbles
- There is no evidence to suggest the risk of transmission is higher at night than during the day
- The sector has offered to reduce capacity to ensure that accommodation facilities deliver a combination of social distancing and segregation from other bubbles
- The sharing of accommodation facilities is permitted at boarding schools and hostels

4. sharing of accommodation more broadly and close living arrangements (including sharing facilities such as canteens, showers and toilets); and

- Schools will maintain their bubbles and will at no point mix within facilities
- Bathroom facilities are not shared outside of bubbles
- Canteens and dining will be staggered and social distanced ensuring the maintenance of bubbles
- The sharing of a canteen, much like all restaurants serving multiple household bubbles, will be regularly cleaned between bubbles and adhere to strict social distancing

5. additional travel across country and the interaction with others that the children and adults accompanying them would not otherwise encounter.

- UK Outdoors accept the tiered lockdown system will prevent certain trips from advancing, specifically to or from those areas within Tier 3
- When travelling to and from the, usually remote, sites schools will maintain their bubble
- Schools remain in their bubble on site and depart within their bubble
- Schools and students rarely, if ever, come into contact with the local community
- Site staff, like all staff in other sectors such as hospitality or accommodation, will adhere to strict hygiene and social distancing measures as well as wearing PPE

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cases at centres offering day trips and general public residential visits

Ask your local MP to support the Save Outdoor Education campaign by joining the APPG on Outdoor Education, making representations to the Department for Education via a letter or by raising the Review on the floor of the House with a parliamentary question or debate

[SIGN THE PETITION TO SAVE OUTDOOR EDUCATION HERE](#)