

SERVICE UPDATE

<u>Name of Function:</u>	Children and Family Services
<u>Date:</u>	04.02.25
<u>Title of Update:</u>	Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill – stage 1 report
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UPDATE:

Members will recall the Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill was introduced to Parliament on 20 June 2024. The Bill proposes that all pupils in state and grant-aided schools have the chance to experience at least four nights and five days of residential outdoor education during their school career. This can be provided all at once or on separate occasions, as long as it totals to the minimum number of nights. The Bill does not make it compulsory for pupils to attend residential outdoor education.

Stage 1 Update

Overall views on the Bill are that residential outdoor education provides benefits to pupils, however the costs associated with implementation caused concern. In addition, it may not be possible to resource as currently staff volunteer to be part of outdoor residential trips.

Should the Bill progress there is a need for clear guidance around:

- Inclusion for all children including those with ASN.
- When the residential should take place in a child's education, with the suggestion that this should be flexible to allow local authorities to respond to local needs.
- The need for a framework to be established to ensure the quality of residential outdoor education is consistent across Scotland.

In conclusion, it is thought that the principles of the Bill are sound, however there are concerns around:

- the financial viability of the Bill;
- potential impact on teachers' terms and conditions (currently staff volunteer to accompany children in residential trips);
- the ability to ensure all children with ASN can participate fully in the offer without significant training for staff; and
- the number and quality of residential outdoor education provisions.