[xx] November 2020

[Name]

[Address]

Dear [Mr/Ms] [Surname],

**Save Outdoor Education – Government Review**

The Government have started their Review of guidance for schools regarding outdoor education and residential visits. As a local MP to [insert name of site], which you will know is facing [fill in threat/risk], please show your support for outdoor education and your local site by joining the APPG on Outdoor Education, chaired by Robin Millar MP. We would also welcome your support in raising your concern with the Department for Education via a letter or parliamentary question and help us to put in place a pathway to restart our sector.

As you are aware, the outdoor education sector is facing an existential threat. Vital outdoor education centres and providers across the UK have been all but shut since March, due to the [Government advising schools against overnight educational visits](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#educational-visits). Without a change or progress at this Review the future of outdoor education - a great British tradition - is hanging by a thread. We stand to lose a vital £700m education industry with over 15,000 jobs while a simple and COVID-safe solution is available and other similar industries, such as boarding schools, continue to operate.

The sector will continue to make it clear to Government that it is safe to operate, having met and exceeded all relevant Government guidelines. It is set up to deliver as an extension of the school bubble policy that Government have deemed safe to operate. At day camps and residential visits for the general public, currently operated by the outdoor education sector, there have been no cases of COVID transmission. We have not seen any evidence, scientific or otherwise, that supports the PHE concerns.

The Government have made it clear that the Review will be focussed on the advice of Public Health England. I have provided the sector’s view of PHE’s five areas of concern for your information.

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
* 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

1. ***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

1. ***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

1. ***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
* Facilities will be cleaned between school visits

1. ***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 that are open, will adhere to strict hygiene and social distancing measures as well as wearing PPE

The Government is aware that any decision to prevent residential trips beyond the 2021 season, without support, would be catastrophic, pushing the majority of the sector into permanent closure. The Government and the Secretary of State for Education have an opportunity to act, protecting the industry and getting children back into safe and excellent educational settings. We welcome your support in pushing for change and defending a vital industry.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you wish to discuss this issue further with us or our industry body, UK Outdoors.

We hope we can count on your support during this Review to save jobs, livelihoods and outdoor education.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

[Job title]