

Statement On how Outdoor Learning can support the reopening of schools in Scotland

Outdoor learning is embedded in Curriculum for Excellence and in our GTCS standards. We know it benefits learning as well as mental and physical wellbeing. In the current situation of reflection, refocus and recovery we believe that outdoor learning and the outdoor environment needs to be at the heart of conversations and planning as we explore how to begin to reopen our schools.

What support can SAPOE provide?

SAPOE has an essential role to play in the ongoing response to Covid -19. Our members already form a robust and effective network in local authorities and independent schools advising, supporting and delivering outdoor learning. We can:

- Continue to provide advice to Scottish and local government on safe practice of all aspects of outdoor learning from school grounds to world wide travel, maths to mountaineering based on the Going Out There framework.
- Provide advice to Scottish Government and Education Services on how to maximise the use of school grounds, community and local greenspaces to facilitate learning whilst social distancing restrictions remain in place. Using outdoor spaces would increase the number of young people being able to return to education.
- Signpost and provide good quality and relevant resources to schools and staff
- Provide Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) training to support staff to deliver learning sessions outdoors.
- Help to increase the capacity of schools to engage more young people in learning by linking to a skilled workforce of outdoor organisations and professionals who could support schools with outdoor learning.
- Outdoor learning is an approach often used with disengaged and challenging young people to re-engage them with education. Outdoor professionals within local authorities are well placed to support these young people back into education as part of a phased reopening of our schools.

Support we are requesting

- A clear directive from Scottish Government to local authorities to support their outdoor learning services and include them in discussions and planning around current activity hubs and future plans for schools returning.
- For SAPOE and other outdoor organisations including SAAF, AHOEC and uniformed organisations to be included in early stage discussions about schools returning and solutions for young people re-engaging in learning and outdoor activities.
- A commitment to support outdoor services and residential centres to ensure their survival.

You can email SAPOE at admin@sapoe.org.uk

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