



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP  
Secretary of State for Education  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
20 Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

29 September 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

**Support for the outdoor education sector**

In light of the latest changes to the Covid-19 measures, I am writing to you to consider the challenges faced by the outdoor education sector.

We are extremely lucky to have two fantastic outdoor activity centres in Wealden: Bowles Rocks and Hindleap Warren. These centres work with thousands of children and young people from all backgrounds, helping them to enhance their potential and develop new skills. Bowles Rocks and Hindleap Warren offer a wide range of healthy outdoor activities such as skiing, rock climbing, water sports, orienteering and camping.

Each year, children and young people from Wealden, London, and all across the South East undertake outdoor activities and learning opportunities, with many participating in residential visits. These experiences provide a vital contribution to the education, welfare and personal development of young individuals by developing interpersonal skills, enhancing self-confidence and mental well-being, and providing healthy outdoor activities. In light of the challenges faced by our children throughout lockdown, an opportunity to visit outdoor learning centres is more important now than ever.

However, the Department for Education is currently advising against residential and non-residential domestic trips for children. This is having a profound financial impact on the sector and it removes a vitally important element of children's education. Children have been missing rounded learning experiences during lockdown and such visits play a fundamental role in building resilience and wellbeing of young Britain post-pandemic.

I am urging the Government to reconsider its position and open up outdoor education experiences this autumn, and to consider what further measures of financial assistance can be put into place to support the sector. We must prevent the lasting damage to the sector as it may result in irreversible closure of outdoor education centres and deny valuable experiences to our children in the future.

Your support would be most welcomed by the most affected businesses in Wealden, as well as by children and educators in Wealden, London and the South East. I look forward to hearing from you further on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "N Ghani".

Nusrat Ghani MP