

Parent/Guardian Information Sheet

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has asked the University of York to evaluate the Outward Bound Trust's Adventure and Challenge Programme. Your child's school is taking part in this evaluation. The purpose of the study is to understand whether this adventure-based programme which is delivered during the school day can help pupils build important life skills such as self-regulation, resilience, wellbeing, and positive learning habits.

What is The Outward Bound Trust's Adventure Challenge Programme?

The Outward Bound Trust Adventure Challenge programme provides immersive outdoor residential experiences. The programme aims to help young people develop resilience, confidence, teamwork, and self-regulation by challenging them in unfamiliar, outdoor environments supported by experienced instructors. Each participating school will identify a group of 24 pupils who would be suitable for the study. Pupils from half of the schools will attend a five-day residential programme at an Outward Bound centre, accompanied by two members of school staff during the academic year 2026-2027. The residential will include physical challenges, teamwork activities, reflection sessions, and guided goal setting. Schools will also deliver a structured set of preparatory and follow-up sessions in school, using materials provided by OBT.

What is the purpose of the research?

We are working with schools to understand whether programmes like Commando Joe's can help pupils improve their self-regulation, resilience, and improve learning. To evaluate this, we will collect information from pupils and staff to understand their experiences and the outcomes of the programme.

The study will take the form of a randomised controlled trial. This means schools will be randomly assigned either to receive Outward Bound Trust's residential programme (the intervention group) or to carry on with teaching and learning as normal (the control group). There will be an equal chance of your child's school being allocated to each group, with half the schools in the intervention group and half in the control group. If, after randomisation, your child's school is assigned to receive the programme, then your child will participate in the programme between November 2026 and May 2027, depending on availability.

What Will Taking Part Involve?

- Pupils from half of the schools will take part in a 5-day residential at an Outward Bound Trust centre.
- Pupils from the other half of the schools will continue with their usual provision (the control group).
- Pupils in both groups will complete brief questionnaires about how they manage their learning, how they cope with challenges, and how they feel about their relationships with teachers and friends, and about their general wellbeing.
- Pupils will complete these questionnaires in 2 x 20 minute sessions in school:
 1. Before the programme begins (May/July 2026)
 2. After the programme finishes (June 2027)
 3. The following school year (October 2027)
- In addition, all pupils will be asked to complete a very short (10-minute questionnaire twice between October 2026 and May 2027. This will be completed in school.
- To help us understand the longer-term impact of the programme, the University of York will securely access some information about your child that is already held by the Department for Education in the National Pupil Database (NPD). The school will share your child's name, date of birth, unique pupil number (UPN) and postcode with the research team so that these records can be matched. All data will be handled in line with data-protection law and used only for this research.
- A small number of pupils and staff may also be invited to take part in short interviews or group discussions about their experiences. These are voluntary and will always take place with a teacher present and last no longer than 45 minutes.

How is my child's information protected?

All information collected will be kept confidential and processed securely in line with UK data protection law (GDPR). No pupil, teacher, or school will be named in any report.

Safeguarding

If a member of the delivery or evaluation team becomes concerned about a child's wellbeing or if a child discloses something that raises a safeguarding concern, this will be shared with the school's safeguarding lead. All Outward Bound Trust staff at residential centres and members of the evaluation team that engage with children as part of data collection are DBS checked and undertake safeguarding training as part of their roles.

Do we have to take part?

Taking part is voluntary. If you are happy for your child to participate in the research, you do not need to return a form.

If you would prefer that your child does not take part in any part of the research, please complete the withdrawal form and return it to your child's teacher.

This will mean that your child will not:

- Take part in the Outward Bound Trust residential programme (if their school is allocated to the programme group)
- Complete any questionnaires.
- Take part in any interviews or group discussions.

You are also welcome to withdraw your child from this project at any point, up until their data has been anonymised, after this point it will no longer be possible to remove them from the project and dataset. To withdraw your child please contact the University of York Evaluation Team via their contact details below.

Who Can I Contact for More Information?

The Outward Bound Trust

Email: Enquiries@outwardbound.org.uk

Department of Education, University of York (Evaluation Team) Department of Education

Email: adventure-learning-education-project@york.ac.uk

For questions about ethical approval or data protection:

- Education Ethics Committee: education-ethics@york.ac.uk
- Data Protection Officer, University of York: dataprotection@york.ac.uk