



Schutzgemeinschaft Deutscher Wald Bundesverband e. V., Dechenstraße. 8, 53115 Bonn

To the
President of the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education of Germany
Dr Stefanie Hubig
and all Ministers of Education of the federal states of Germany
Postfach 11 03
10833 Berlin

Bonn, April 9, 2020

Extracurricular environmental education as an important part of school education

Dear Dr Hubig,
Dear Ministers,

the German Association for the Protection of Forest (SDW) considers the current protective measures by the authorities against the spread of the SARS-CoV2 virus to be correct and important. For example, we do a large part of our work from home-office and make it possible to continue activities to convey the importance of the forest for people during the Corona crisis.

As a national nature conservation association for forest protection, our network consists of numerous environmental education actors who, like us, are actively involved in implementing the national and international mandate for education for sustainable development (ESD) in the forest. They do valuable educational work for high-quality education in schools and extracurricular learning locations.

Actors in extracurricular education are particularly affected by the current school decrees, as their programs and events are mostly booked by schoolchildren. Regulations such as the prohibition on visiting non-school learning venues until the end of the school year would further endanger the existence of numerous educational actors. Then a considerable part of the extra-curricular education actors could no longer contribute to demanded high-quality, modern education.

For that reason, we ask you, when planning the next steps in the corona crisis, to tie the resumption of school lessons with the visits of non-school learning venues and forest-related educational events.

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Please consider the following arguments supporting our proposal:

- Extracurricular education, such as forest-related environmental education, is a fundamental component of high-quality, modern education and is part of the national and international educational mandate (see KMK 2007, UN World Action Program 2019). Out-of-school learning opportunities are mostly represented in a form of school events.
- School classes mostly attend extracurricular learning venues and educational events within the same group, therefore in our opinion the risk of infection is not higher.
- Events of extracurricular, forest-related environmental education usually take place in a forest or natural area. The risk of infection outside is rather less than in the classroom or in the schoolyard.
- Visiting a forest has a scientifically proven health-promoting effect. Outdoor exercises, fresh air and other nature-based experiences could help strengthening the immune system of the pupils.

For further questions and participation in the next steps, we are of course available for exchange and support.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wolfgang von Geldern'.

Dr. Wolfgang von Geldern

State Secretary a. D.

President

Attachment



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