



From: The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Leader, Mathew Dempsey

14 September 2018

**Parents of Sixth Year Students
Duke of Edinburgh Award Gold Level**

Dear Parents

Introduction

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award offers a personal challenge through its balanced programme of activities. Boys are encouraged to serve others, acquire new skills and experience adventure. It is non-competitive, being based on individual improvement and achievement, reflecting personal choice, initiative and perseverance and, in some cases, leadership.

When boys sign up for the Award they will be provided with a welcome pack, and a logon ID and password for the eDofE recording system. The welcome pack contains various leaflets, a 'Keeping Track' booklet for recording progress within the various sections of the award, and a discount card for use with some outdoor shops.

Boys joining the Award should be aware that it is their award. This means that it is for them to motivate themselves to complete the skill, volunteering and physical sections. The amount of time required for each section is contained on the Award web site; however it equates to approximately one hour a week over a twelve month period for two of the three sections and over a six month period for either the physical or skill section. At Gold level boys also need to complete a residential section over four nights away from home. Some boys are allocated one of the limited places only to drop from the scheme during the year because they do not motivate themselves to continue, by which time it is too late to reallocate their place. Please ask your son to consider if he can commit to the time required to complete the award before applying. In reality boys at the school in most cases can use something they are doing in school to satisfy the criteria as long as it is outside normal lessons. For instance, music lessons can be used, as well as some Other Half clubs and sports. The only section that is arranged for them is the Expedition section. This is so that we can ensure that they are safe and that the criteria of the award are met. Further details of when the expeditions take place are further on in this letter and in the school website calendar. Places are limited so early application is advised.

The award internet site 'www.dofe.org' is the best source of information and is updated frequently with new ideas and information. Potential participants are strongly advised to look at the site before applying for a place on the Award in school.

Costs

The major costs associated with the scheme are for the joining materials and travel expenses for the expeditions, although every effort is made to keep these to a minimum. For planning purposes some costs are detailed below based on previous years' expeditions. There is also the initial enrolment fee.

Enrolment fee £55.00 This includes initial registration with eDofE, a welcome pack, completion

Abingdon School, Park Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 1DE

Tel: 01235 521563 Fax: 01235 849079

www.abingdon.org.uk

certificate, badge (on completion), and a contribution to safety equipment, the DofE centre license, expedition equipment maintenance and replacement.

Expeditions: Practice expedition around £120.00 approx – Dartmoor TBC
Qualifying expedition around £200.00 approx – Lake District TBC

These are per boy to cover items such as travel, campsite fees, maps, cooking fuel and maintenance of the school kit.

Expedition Training

Expedition training and planning is organised centrally. It is **essential** that your son attends **all** the planning and training sessions so that his eDofE account can be signed off showing that he has completed the mandatory training and has reached an acceptable level of competence. It is also essential that boys work together as a group. Groups will also be required to do a planning task in readiness for the assessed expedition. Dates for both the training days and planning sessions are below.

Communication with boys is done via email using their school email addresses only. Some other more general information can be found on the DofE noticeboard in Big School lower corridor. All letters for trips etc are sent to both boys and parents via email only.

Training and Expedition Dates (Walking)

- Saturday 9 March 9:00 - 12:00 (Route Planning)
- Monday 15 April – Thursday 18 April (Practice Expedition) – **this is in the Easter holidays**
- Saturday 18 May 9:00 - 12:00 (Route Planning)
- Sunday 30 June - Thursday 4 July (Assessed Expedition)

Boys **must** take part and complete both expeditions and the training mornings. Failure to do so will result in them not completing the expedition section and therefore not obtaining the award at that level. Therefore please consider if your son will be available for both expeditions and the training before applying for him to join the award. If boys have other commitments on these dates it is possible to do the expeditions externally using another provider but this will need to be organised by them.

Joining the Scheme

To join the scheme boys need to sit down with their parents and complete this Google form before the 24 September 2018:

<https://goo.gl/forms/EewBxoo7ccnUX6FW2>

As previously mentioned, numbers are limited, mainly due to capacity in the areas that we run the expeditions. **Boys who have completed their Silver Award by the 24 September 2018 will have priority** followed by boys who have nearly completed as per their eDofE account. If your son wishes to join the award scheme as a direct entrant please refer to the website to be aware of the additional time scales (up to 18 months). Direct entrant boys will also need to complete some additional training that will be held over a weekend in January. Once boys have been allocated a place they will be notified by email.

Boys who are allocated a place will also receive, prior to the induction briefing, an email with their logion ID and password to the eDofE system.

Finally boys need to be aware that, although the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme is not time-constrained (up to age 25), they should attempt to complete each element within a specified time, and that this will require a consistent effort and commitment on their part to achieve.

Yours sincerely

Mathew Dempsey - DofE Co-ordinator, Abingdon School
mathew.dempsey@abigndon.org.uk