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

21 June 2019

Dear Parents

**Parents of Fourth Year Students**

**Duke of Edinburgh Award Silver Level**

**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, 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 6 months for the Volunteering section and a minimum of 6 months on either the Physical or Skills and 3 months on the other. 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. In school we offer three types of expedition at Silver level: walking, canoeing and sailing. 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.

Boys wishing to complete their expedition by sailing or canoeing should get in touch with Mr Simmons and Mr Johnson respectively for further information.

**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 (£21), completion certificate, badge (on completion), and a contribution to safety equipment, the DofE centre license, expedition equipment maintenance and replacement.

Walking Expeditions: Practice expedition between £90 and £105.00 approx

Qualifying expedition around £110.00 approx

These costs are per boy to cover items such as travel, campsite fees, maps, cooking fuel and maintenance of the school kit. (*Costs for canoeing and sailing are slightly higher due to increased travel and hire costs – please refer to the canoeing and sailing letters.*)

**Expedition Training**

Expedition training and planning is organised centrally. Many of the boys will have completed much of the training during the expedition skills section of their service activity or through the CCF. It is **essential** that your son attends **all** the remaining 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 Walking Expedition Dates**

 Saturday 7 September: 9am-12 - Route planning

 Friday 20 September: 9am – Sunday 22 September 8pm - Practice expedition.

 Gower Peninsula

 Saturday 29 February: 9am-12 - Route-planning

 Sunday 28 June: 2pm - Wednesday 1 July 8pm - Assessed expedition.

Brecon Beacons

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.

**Joining the Scheme**

Please find a link below to an application form. Please complete this before Thursday 4 July 2019.

Link: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc-1NhJHqf3VHPIgtCN6BjbOQcNJHpBz_csyM9kM2Ktrlr3dA/viewform?usp=sf_link>

As previously mentioned, numbers are limited, mainly due to capacity in the areas that we run the expeditions. **Boys who have completed their Bronze Award by Thursday 4 July will have priority in order of when they completed.** Once boys have been allocated a place boys will be notified by email; this will be before September. Parents will be notified should their son not be successful. If the number of places on the school expeditions are full it is still possible to complete Silver level but an external provider will need to be used for the expedition section.

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 should they not already have one.

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.

Please make sure your son is aware that to progress on to Gold he will need to have completed all sections of the award at Silver and for it to have been signed off on eDofE before Tuesday 15 September 2020.

Yours sincerely

**Mathew Dempsey**

DofE Co-ordinator

mathew.dempsey@abingdon.org.uk