



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

4 September 2023

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

Dear Parents,

**Introduction**

The Duke of Edinburgh's award offers a personal challenge through a balanced programme of activities. Students 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 students sign up for the award they will be provided with a welcome pack, a login 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 in various outdoor shops.

Students 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 [website](#); 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 the remaining section. At Gold level students also need to undertake a shared activity in a residential setting away from home for 5 days and 4 nights. In most cases students 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 many Other Half clubs and sports, a suggested list can be found [here](#). Some students are allocated one of the 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 child to consider if he can commit to the time required to complete the award before applying.

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. All students will be offered a place to complete their expedition by walking and depending on uptake canoeing may also be available. Further details of when the walking expeditions take place are further on in this letter and in the school website calendar.

The award's website [www.dofe.org](http://www.dofe.org) is the best source of information and is updated frequently with new ideas and information. Participants new to the scheme are strongly advised to look at the site or to watch this [presentation](#) before applying for a place on the award in school. Direct entrants, students who have not completed Silver level, are invited to apply but should be aware of the additional [timescales](#) meaning it will take a minimum of 18 months to complete the award.

**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 expeditions. There is also the initial enrolment fee.

Enrolment fee £55.00 This includes initial registration with eDofE (£32.50), a welcome pack,

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certificate and badge (on completion), a contribution to licencing cost, a contribution to safety and expedition equipment maintenance and replacement.

Expeditions: Practice expedition £170 approx - TBC  
Qualifying expedition £220 approx –TBC

These are per student to cover items such as travel, campsite fees, maps, cooking fuel and maintenance of the school kit but does not include food which is purchased and planned by teams.

### **Expedition Training**

Expedition training and planning is organised centrally. Direct entrants will need to complete an additional training weekend (TBC) to gain the skills other students would have gained at Silver level. It is **essential** that your child attends **all** the remaining planning and training sessions so that their eDofE account can be signed off showing that they have completed the mandatory training and have reached an acceptable level of competence. It is also essential that students work together as a group. Groups will also be required to plan their expedition routes in readiness for the assessed expedition. Dates for both the training day and planning sessions are below.

### **Training and Walking Expedition Dates**

Saturday 9 March 2024. 8:55 -12:00 (Route Planning)  
Friday 12 – Monday 15 April 2024. (Practice Expedition) – **this is in the Easter holidays**  
Saturday 18 May 2024. 8:55 - 12:00 (Route Planning)  
Sunday 16 – Friday 21 June 2024. (Assessed Expedition)

Students **must** take part and complete both expeditions and the route planning 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 child will be available for both expeditions and route planning sessions before applying for them to join the award.

### **Joining the Scheme**

To join the scheme students and parents should complete this google form together. It will only be valid if it comes from a parents e-mail account. The form should be completed by Tuesday 19 September 2023.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc\\_reMVAMh8n-XSxnNyM0ZDoAY9tZM89GxKLFF-cdRhoMc0tA/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc_reMVAMh8n-XSxnNyM0ZDoAY9tZM89GxKLFF-cdRhoMc0tA/viewform?usp=sf_link)

Once students have been allocated a place they will be notified by email, the start date will be Friday 1 September so students may start their activities immediately. Due to the time it takes to set up with an eDofE account there may be a short delay.

Finally, students need to be aware that, although the Duke of Edinburgh's Award 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.