



ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS & PARTICIPANTS

DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD
BRONZE, SILVER & GOLD EXPEDITION PROGRAMMES



Contents

1.	What is the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Programme?	Page 3
2.	Supervision of Activities	Page 4
3.	Requirements and Expectations of the Participants	Page 5
4.	Award Programme Completion Timeframes	Page 6
5.	Costs and Payment	Page 7
6.	Kit List	Page 9
7.	Code of Conduct for Participants	Page 11
8.	Removal from the Programme	Page 11
9.	Electronic Equipment and Mobile Phone Policy	Page 12
10.	Participants with Medical Conditions and Special Dietary Requirements	Page 13
11.	The e-DofE System and Completing the Award	Page 14



1. What is the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Programme?

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a nationally recognised programme in which young people undertake development challenges in four (or five) areas (sections):

1. Physical activity
2. Skills
3. Expedition
4. Volunteering
5. Residential (Gold Award only)

There are three levels of award: **Bronze, Silver** and **Gold**. At each level the amount of time and independence required for completion of each section is increased. At Bronze and Silver, the School or Delivery Centre will provide a level of support for each section, and monitor how well the challengers are completing their electronic log books (online). A certain level of parental support will be necessary for the young people outside of their school or organisation to help them complete some activities they may choose to take on e.g. joining a sports club, attending music lessons or finding a volunteering opportunity.

Completion of the Award gives a great sense of achievement. Anyone who achieves the Gold Award is invited to Buckingham Palace to receive their award from the Duke of Edinburgh himself. What's more, the Award is valued by colleges, universities and employers because of the skills it helps the young people develop. Challengers can receive individual certificates for completing each section and so do not have to complete all sections to get a certificate. They do have to complete all sections to achieve the full award at Bronze, Silver or Gold.

The Five Sections

There is a massive choice of activities that count towards D of E programmes. From the start, participants must take ownership of their programmes by choosing the activities they wish to pursue in each section. **Participants cannot use activities that are entirely curriculum subjects with no extra personal effort.** Choices and ideas will be discussed with a school mentor to ensure that these activities meet the section aims.

Volunteering

This is all about making a difference to other people's lives. From conservation to youth work to fundraising for a favourite charity or caring for animals, there's an endless list of the types of projects participants can get involved in.

Skill

Develop new talents or perfect existing ones. The key is to show progression and sustained interest over time. Ultimately, participants must be able to prove that they have broadened their understanding and increased their expertise of their chosen skill. Activities can be undertaken on either an individual or group basis.

Physical

Participate and show improvement in performance and fitness within your capabilities in a chosen sport.

A list of all the activities can be found on the D of E website: www.dofe.org

Expedition

This involves planning, training for and completing an unaccompanied, self-reliant expedition with an agreed aim, on foot, bicycle, horseback or by canoe. All participants will take part in an intensive training programme and participate in an accompanied practice journey before taking part in the final expedition assessment. For Bronze the Expedition is over two days with one overnight camp. Silver is three days and two overnight camps and Gold is a minimum of four days and three nights.

For the expedition section our Centre will be working with an external provider called **GRIP Expeditions**. They specialise in training and supervising expedition groups and are approved by the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme, so hold all the relevant qualifications, insurance and policies for this.

Note: Expedition training and practice events will run over some weekends and avoid school week as much as possible but that is unavoidable for the Silver and Gold awards.

Unsupervised means that there will be trained supervisors just out of sight for the groups and meeting them at set locations. This is known as remote supervision and all D of E supervisors are trained for this. There are processes in place for emergency aid and evacuation. The level of remote supervision is always appropriate for the level of training the young people have received at each level of award.

Residential Week (Gold only)

One week spent working on a purposeful project, in an unfamiliar environment, with people not known to the participant e.g.: environmental and conservation work, or service to others.

2. Supervision of Activities

Staff and Instructors

All GRIP Expeditions Instructors and Assessors are qualified to UK Mountain Training / Canoe England standards for the level of instruction they are providing. All staff undertake safeguarding and equal opportunities training and hold a clean Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced Check.

Sleeping and gender

During training and qualifying expeditions, groups may be mixed sex. Males and females will always be segregated when it comes to sleeping in tents.

Often groups may only have a male instructor and / or assessor. There will always be a member of school / organisation staff available if any participant has an issue they would like to discuss.

Close and Remote Supervision

The aim of the expedition is for the participants to feel that they planned and carried out the expedition with as little adult intervention as possible. The idea being gradually to remove adult supervision as groups gain experience. On the final qualifying expedition groups are on their own whilst they travel and camp. This will mean that participants will be away from direct adult supervision for long periods. Overnight camps are supervised by leaders who will be on the campsite but not close to the participants' tents. They are met at pre-arranged check points and we will check in with them at the campsites. For Gold expeditions, the teams will usually undertake a wild camp.

If we feel that your child cannot be trusted, or there is an incident which we decide that will endanger the safety of other participants, instructors, staff or members of the public, then they will be removed from the event and a parent or guardian will be expected to come and collect them from wherever they are, at whatever time of the day or night that might be.

All water-based expeditions must of course be more closely supervised whilst on the water, with qualified staff observing from a distance of up to 1km. Once on land they also will be on their own.

3. Requirements and Expectations of the Participants

Commitment

Participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award requires a serious long- term commitment from the young person but also involves a lot of time, effort and expense for the school/Centre. It also requires expense and commitment from the parents. For this reason, we ask that before your child enrolls for this programme, you and your child think about how much time and motivation they will have for this programme over the course of the school year.

Participants and parents must check the dates carefully in order to ensure that there are no clashes with other activities. Participants will not be excused from a training weekend or training session because other commitments arise. All of the training is essential to ensure your child and their group are properly trained and equipped to allow them to undertake an expedition safely. We cannot allow young people to attend their qualifying Expedition if training is incomplete. **The enrolment and training costs are not refundable as all costs are paid in advance by the school.**

Effort & Initiative

A great deal of effort and initiative is required from the Participants themselves. They must be motivated and fit enough to complete the course of training for the Expedition and to carry it out. They must also be prepared to meet, on their own initiative, the requirements of the Volunteering, Skills, Physical, Expedition and Residential (Gold only) sections of the Award. Participants must also be responsible for returning forms on time, meeting deadlines, attending meetings and all training and planning days and keeping their e-DofE log book up to date.

Safety & Discipline

The outcome of the Expedition is that the group of young people are able to undertake a journey without the need for adults to accompany them. The school/organisation must be confident that each participant is competent to take part in their final unaccompanied expedition, therefore all training and practice journeys must be completed in full and no exceptions will be made. There must also be a bond of trust between staff and participants. This trust must be created through the safe and sensible conduct of participants throughout the training period. If at any stage it is felt that participants cannot be trusted to carry out the expeditions safely and in the absence of adult supervision, they will be removed from the scheme.

For schools, participation in the scheme is an addition to the curriculum and must not be considered an automatic right.

4. Award Programme Completion Timeframes

Participants need at least **6 months** to complete a **Bronze** programme.

Silver also takes at least **6 months** for a complete programme.

For **Gold**, the programme will take at least **12 months, based on the participant already holding the silver award.**

These times are based on a participant working on all the sections at the same time. Often it is good practice to spread them out, especially if participants are undertaking exams during the summer months. If a participant is a 'direct entrant' into a Silver or Gold award, without having undertaken the previous award, then there is an extra time commitment and level of training required.

Participants will need to show regular activity and commitment during this time of at least an hour a week for each activity. You can't achieve an Award in a short burst of enthusiasm over one weekend!

Most D of E training and qualifying sessions take place during weekends and school holidays.

Participants and parents must check the dates carefully in order to ensure that there are no clashes with other activities. Participants must not expect to be excused from a training weekend or training session because other commitments arise. All of the training is essential to ensure individual and group safety. We will not send Participants out by themselves on expedition if training is incomplete. The enrolment and training costs are not refundable as all costs are paid in advance by the school.

Changes/cancellation to training dates or times

It is intended that all timetabled training days and expeditions go ahead as planned as a lot of time, coordination and cost goes into such days, but occasionally due to severe weather conditions training dates may need to be rearranged. Timings may differ slightly from time to time due to progress made by participants whilst on their journey, and so they can be late back to your pick up point.

Parents will be kept up to date of any changes to the timetable, and will be able to check the school or organisation's online notice board if in doubt about any last minute cancellations due to weather conditions or unforeseen circumstances.

Due to the nature of such trips and variants in participants' physical abilities, the weather, conditions under foot or on the water, return times may vary. Parents will be notified as soon as possible by the participants or supervisors if return times change significantly. Apologies in advance if these circumstances arise.

5. Costs and Payment

All payments should be made directly to the school / organisation. The participant's name and D of E award level should be clearly marked on the back of any cheque.

Unfortunately, failure to meet a payment must mean that a place will not be booked. The payment is due when enrolling and training costs are non-refundable. Parents/Guardians must note that on top of the payment cost for the programme, they may need to buy personal equipment suitable for the outdoors. Please see the kit list for details.

Payments for the programme include the following:

- Training day(s)
- Practice expedition
- Assessed expedition
- Registration with D of E scheme and their e-log book
- Administration Cost

Payments for the programme MAY include (please check with your coordinator):

- Campsite fees
- Group equipment (tents, first aid kits, stoves, sleeping mat, maps)

Payments for the programme DO NOT include:

- Food
- Personal clothing
- Hiking boots
- Expedition rucksack
- Sleeping bag
- Waterproof coat and over trousers
- Head torch

Personal Kit

It is hoped that the participants will be inspired to further pursue outdoor activities such as walking, camping and canoeing, hopefully getting a lot of use out of the personal equipment they may need to buy for DofE. If they progress from Bronze through Silver to Gold then of course the kit will be used over and again, and good quality kit will be useful for many years to come, for travelling, gap years or world challenge type trips.

It is advisable to ask friends and family if they have kit that you can borrow though, especially for Bronze, as the participant might find that the outdoor life isn't for them, and an investment in kit might be wasted. There are also a good number of excellent suppliers of good quality budget kit these days, from Decathlon, Lidl and Aldi, through to websites like Alpkite.com and Sportpursuit.co.uk. Cotswold Outdoor and Snow& Rock also sponsor the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and offer participants 15% discount both in store and online.

Save on the simple things but concentrate on good quality boots and a comfortable rucksack for the best chance of a successful walking expedition. For canoeing, good waterproofs are a bonus!

Rough Costings

Hiking boots - £50 to £150. Look for a high ankle cuff and a stiffer sole unit than a walking shoe.

Waterproof over trousers (should be 'breathable') - £20 to £50

Waterproof coat (must be 'breathable') - £40 to £150

Fleece mid layers - from £10

Wicking T shirt base layers – from £5

Expedition rucksack (approx. 60 litres) - £50 to £120

Sleeping bag - £20 to £100

Sleeping mat - From £15 for a self inflating mat. GRIP can provide a foam mat.

Meals and snacks - approx. £50 (The participants will plan and shop for these themselves.)

Note: Please check before any planned expedition that your child is sufficiently prepared. They should pack all of their own gear, but you should ensure that they have included all essential equipment, sufficient sustenance and medication.

For expeditions on foot, new boots should be worn prior to a training day to ensure correct fit and comfort. Blisters often prevent a young person from completing their expedition. Any hotspots can be covered with zinc oxide tape or fabric plaster tape to help prevent blisters forming.

Participants without the appropriate equipment outlined as a minimum above, will not be able to participate due to safety reasons. Parents will be expected to pick participants up from the start point, or from whichever base is being used, should such a situation arise.

6. Kit List: Walking Expeditions

(Please see <https://www.dofeshopping.org/dofe-expedition-kit-list/> for the official list and a leaflet with a little more detail.)

Participants will need to provide the following:

- **Hiking boots** – higher cuff and stiffer sole than a walking shoe. Broken in before expedition.
- **Hiking socks** – 2 pairs, loop stitch. No cotton sports socks. Some participants also like to wear a liner sock if they are prone to blisters.
- **Wicking ‘base layer’ T shirts** – 2 or 3. Should be technical fabric (often polyester). Merino Wool is good. *No cotton.*
- **Thermal long sleeve ‘base layer’** – for colder conditions. Wicking, as above. Optional.
- **Thermal leggings** might also be a good idea for expeditions in colder months. Optional.
- **Warm ‘mid layer’ tops** – 2. Thickness will depend on time of year. Usually 2 lightweight ‘100g’ fleece tops are sufficient as they are warm enough for a cold night when layered together. *No cotton.*
- **Walking trousers** – 2 pairs. Should be polyester or nylon. Lightweight tracksuit trousers are good. No jeans, no jersey fabric, no heavy canvas. ‘Zip off’ trousers are flexible for the summer months.
- **Underwear** – enough for each day.
- **Nightwear** – optional. Most participants use their spare T Shirt!
- **Lightweight sandals or trainers** for the evening in camp. Flip flops are ok for just walking to the toilet but not suitable for playing football in the campsite!
- **Warm hat, gloves, buff, sunhat, sunglasses** – these should be carried regardless of the season, thanks to a fickle UK climate, though in summer lightweight gloves are fine. A baseball hat or sunhat is essential for sunny days. Check the forecast.
- **Waterproof coat** – essential that this fits well and has a good hood. Not a thick ski jacket.
- **Waterproof over trousers** – these must slip on easily over the walking trousers. A zip on the ankle or up the leg will help.
- **Gaiters** – helpful for Gold or Silver participants where boots need to stay drier for longer and boggy ground may be encountered. Optional.
- **Expedition rucksack** – approx. 60 litres. No bigger than 70l, no smaller than 50l. Everything (except the foam sleeping mat) must go inside and be waterproofed.
- **Stuff sacks / rucksack liner** – Sleeping bags and spare clothes **MUST** be waterproofed. High quality bin bags, a selection of rubble bags, nylon ‘dry’ bags or a combination of all of these are the best way of keeping kit dry as well as organised. Different coloured bags for different things are great.
- **Sleeping Bag** – in a compression sack. Look for at least 2 season for summer expeditions, 3 or 4 season for early or late season trips. Most participants also use a liner to save washing the sleeping bag as frequently, and to add some warmth.
- **Sleeping Mat** – GRIP can lend you a foam mat, but you might prefer to get your own. Inflatable foam mats are usually warmer and more comfortable than closed cell foam.
- **Survival bag and whistle** – survival bags are available cheaply from outdoor shops. Most rucksacks have a whistle on the chest strap.
- **Head torch** – include a spare set of batteries.
- **Personal First Aid Kit** – some plasters, some blister plasters, a small crepe bandage, some antiseptic cleaning wipes, personal medication (named).
- **Sun cream and mosquito repellent** – this may be better bought for the group and shared.
- **Water bottles** - a minimum of 2 litres. Hydration kits are good for walking, but you must have a bottle too.
- **Bowl, mug, cutlery / spork, penknife** – no heavy cutlery set, use lightweight clip sets or a spork. Plastic or enamel bowls & mugs are ideal. *No china!*
- **Matches or a lighter** – in a waterproof bag.
- **Wash kit** – small travel bottles, *no full size bottles or aerosols. No heavy wash bags. Use a ziplock bag!* Wet wipes are useful. Include anti-bac hand gel and a few sheets of toilet paper folded up in a bag. Don’t forget your toothbrush!
- **Travel towel** – lightweight micro-fibre towel. These are available cheaply from sports shops like Decathlon. *No bath towels.*
- **Watch** – everyone should have a cheap watch that has an alarm.
- **Notebook and pencil / pen** – for taking notes for the project and presentation, noting photos taken etc.
- **Personal snacks** – small cereal bars, mini chocolate bars, trail mix, haribo etc. Small bags to go in pockets.

Between the group:

- **Pan scourer / sponge and washing up liquid** – small bottle in a ziplock bag.
- **Tea towel** – small microfibre ones are best.
- **Food** – team meals should all be packed in bags labeled for each day and each meal. Remove excess packaging and ensure nothing needs refrigeration.
- **Plastic bags** – a few plastic bags for rubbish or wet clothes.
- **Map Cases** – enough for each map (maps are supplied)
- **Compasses** – 1 between 2 participants (1 each for Gold). Must be good quality with a large clear baseplate and no bubbles in the dial.

GRIP Expeditions can provide the following for participants:

- **Tents**
- **Grab bag including a group first aid kit, emergency shelter and emergency mobile**
- **Stove, pans and fuel**
- **Maps**

7. Code of Conduct for Participants

1. I will listen to instructions given to me by the staff, instructors, supervisors or assessors and follow them whether I immediately agree with them or not.
2. I understand that any such instructions will be given for my safety, the safety of others and the smooth running of the expedition.
3. I will wear all the appropriate safety equipment/clothing I am given for the expedition.
4. I will consult my watch and be punctual at meeting points.
5. I will conduct myself courteously towards all members of staff, instructors, my peers and members of the public.
6. I will use the bins provided and not drop litter on the transport, while travelling on expedition, at the campsite or in any other environment.
7. I will always wear a seat-belt during the coach journeys.
8. I will behave sensibly on the roads and in the countryside so as not to endanger myself or other members of the party.
9. I will look after my belongings and not expect others to be responsible for them.
10. I will look after my team's belongings and respect those which have been lent to me.
11. I will dress appropriately so as not to cause embarrassment to the school.
12. I will not consume any alcohol or drugs or smoke on the trip. If I do, I understand I will be sent home at the expense of my parent/guardian.
13. I will not carry any weapons on me and will not bring / purchase any items that would be deemed inappropriate in school.
14. I will not damage or lose school or GRIP Expeditions equipment through carelessness. I accept that I will have to pay for such loss or damage at replacement cost.
15. I will not have mobile phones or Ipods/MP3's switched on during activity time.
16. I will not use participation in the Award as an excuse for not doing homework.
17. I will not miss school the day following training or an expedition*.

** Training days are long and can be both physically and mentally demanding it is imperative that both participants and staff have sufficient sleep and that there is no noise after 11.00 pm. A lack of sleep can have an impact on safety which will not be compromised.*

I understand that this Code of Conduct represents a minimum standard of behaviour on the trip and my disobedience or disregard of this Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action and possible expulsion from the programme. My enrolment onto the programme is an acceptance of this code.

Removal from the programme

Alcohol, smoking, drug taking, and being in the tents of the opposite sex are immediate 'send home' offences, as are other serious breaches of discipline. If we feel that your child cannot be trusted, or there is an incident which we decide that will endanger the safety of other participants, instructors, staff or members of the public, then the participant will be removed from the event and a parent or guardian will be expected to come and collect them from wherever they are, at whatever time of the day or night that might be. Enrolment and training costs are not refundable.

8. Electronic Equipment and Mobile Phone Policy

Mobile Phones

It is accepted that Participants may wish to carry a mobile with them. The following points however should be noted:

- **Participants are expected to only use phones in case of an emergency.** Mobiles do not guarantee that someone is contactable. For most of the area in which participants are working there is no network coverage. We have other ways of monitoring, checking and contacting groups.
- **Mobiles must not be switched on during activity time.**
- **All staff reserve the right to remove mobiles from participants where irresponsible use is suspected.**
- Participants' mobiles may get wet. They will be responsible for the damage or loss.
- Parents of participants who do not carry mobiles must accept that other participants will be carrying mobile equipment, which may give unrestricted access to the internet.

IPODS, MP3 Players or Stereos

It is advisable not to bring such devices as there is a possibility they could get damaged or broken. However, if a participant does bring such equipment they must only be used with headphones in order to keep noise down on campsites. They must not be used during activity time.

All staff reserve the right to remove such equipment from participants if rules are not met.

9. Participants with Medical Conditions and Special Dietary Requirements

Dispensing of Non Prescription Drugs

Parents and participants should be aware that staff will not dispense any drugs.

Over-the-counter painkillers can be provided in the participants' first aid kits but a staff member must be informed before any are taken.

Any prescription drugs which the participant requires during the expedition must be packed and named. If a participant requires medical treatment or a prescription then they will be removed from the expedition and will need to be sent to a GP. The parent/guardian on their contact form will be called to collect them in non-urgent cases.

If participants are taking any drugs, they must be detailed (with the dose) on the consent form.

Epi-Pens and Inhalers

Parents of participants with allergies or asthma must give the relevant information on the consent form. **Participants are expected to bring their own inhalers and Epi-pens if required.**

Policy on Allergies

Allergies and Intolerances must be marked clearly on the **consent form** and if appropriate you should inform your member of staff and group about your condition **at the beginning of each trip** telling them your requirements. When on expedition, always check the contents label of your food. You must take a large measure of responsibility for yourself here. Your team should also be aware of your requirements and help to reduce the risk of accidental ingestion.

Policy on Epilepsy

Parents of participants with epilepsy must give the relevant information on consent form. Participants who suffer from epilepsy are usually allowed to participate in walking expeditions, but not water activities. Please contact GRIP for further clarification on this.

Policy on Diabetes

Parents of participants with diabetes must give the relevant information on consent form. Participants with diabetes are usually allowed to participate in both walking and canoeing expeditions. Increased and sustained high level of activity should be taken into consideration when packing food and insulin for all training and expeditions.

Policy on Hay fever

Hay fever sufferers should be aware that pollen counts are likely to be much higher in the countryside than in the city and therefore additional precautions should be taken if appropriate.

Updating of Medical Details and Emergency Contact Numbers

As participation in the scheme is spread over a long period of time, medical details and emergency contact numbers may change. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to keep the school informed of any relevant changes

10. The e-DofE System and Completing the Award

What is e-DofE?

E-DofE is an interactive online system that helps participants manage their DofE programme and Leaders monitor their progress. It provides participants with the ability to record their programme online and prevents evidence getting lost. It gives them the opportunity to record evidence in a host of different formats including text, pictures and movies

Volunteering, Skill & Physical Sections of the Award:

The requirements of the Physical, Skill and Volunteering sections and the Residential Week (Gold only), inevitably involve participants with a very broad range of activities and individuals outside of the school or organisation's community. **It is the responsibility of participants themselves to make their own arrangements for the completion of these sections.** Help and guidance is of course given initially, and at regular intervals, and is always available on request.

Given the number of participants involved in the Award in each organisation, it is impossible for the school or organisation to check out every venue and every adult helper, and no attempt will be made to do so. It cannot be over-emphasised therefore that **it is the responsibility of parents and not the school or organisation**, to ensure that arrangements made by participants with respect to these sections are appropriate to successful completion of the Award, and above all are safe.

E-DofE Sections – Personal Goals

Participants should discuss their options carefully with parents and their D of E mentor before deciding on an activity. Once an activity has been chosen, participants must check with the member of staff responsible for each activity before starting a D of E section. An aim and personal goals for each section of the award should be agreed at the beginning. If an activity has been chosen outside of your school / organisation, whoever may be in charge for that activity should be approached and aims and goals discussed.

Completing the Award

Once a section is completed, participants must not expect their e-DofE sections to be signed on demand. Participants are expected to be polite and courteous at all times when asking for a completed report and signature as many assessors are volunteers and have other full-time roles.

E-DofE completion must not be left to the last minute as there is no guarantee assessor reports will be completed in time.

Successful Candidates

Completed e-DofE logs, once checked, will be electronically confirmed by the school or organisation's DofE Coordinator and he/she will progress this to the DofE Scheme Head Office. Certification and the Award Badge will be sent in due course. Bronze and Silver Awards will be posted. **Participants who achieve their Gold Award will be invited to attend a prize giving at one of the Royal Palaces in the presence of either HRH The Duke of Edinburgh or HRH The Earl of Wessex.**