

Dear Parent/ Carer,

Your child has shown an interest in joining our Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Gold Award group. This is an internationally recognised award for young people, designed to encourage them to develop independence, commitment, leadership and teamwork through being involved in a personalised programme of activities. It may provide a great opportunity to keep busy over the long summer and beyond in the current situation.

Similar to the Bronze and Silver Awards, Gold is split into sections: Volunteering, Physical, Skill, and Expedition. There is also an additional Residential Section for the Gold Award. The timeframes are summarised in the table below.

Volunteering	Physical	Skills	Expedition	Residential
12 months	One section for 6 months and the other section for 12 months		Plan, train for and undertake a 4 day, 3 night expedition in wild country	5 days, 4 nights on a shared activity or course with people you don't know
Direct entrants (who have not completed Silver) must undertake a further 6 months in either the Volunteering or the longer of the Physical or Skills sections.				

The award takes at least 12 months to complete and requires regular commitment to various activities. In school we will focus on the Expedition Section in year 12 and the start of year 13, while supporting the completion of the other 4 sections. I thoroughly recommend the residential gets completed before the start of year 13 for the best chance of completing the award.

This [link](#) offers some suggestions for what participants could do for each section. It is important that there is progression from the Bronze and Silver level and students should set themselves more challenging targets within each section.

Expedition Section

The Expedition section requires participants to undertake an assessed 4 day backpacking expedition. The area that the expeditions take place will be wild country and will involve more remote campsites. It will be physically challenging. Before this, participants need to attend expedition training day and take part in a practice expedition. H5 Adventure will be running the training day at school on Sunday 1st March 2026. Students **must** attend this session in order to go on to complete the expeditions. There will also be some extra after

school route planning sessions between the practice and the qualifying expedition. The practice expedition will be Thursday 2nd July (after school departure) – Sunday 5th July 2026, with the qualifying expedition planned for the start of year 13, provisionally booked for Thursday 10th September (morning departure) – Sunday 13th 2025.

Participants will be expected to have their own personal kit. School can provide tents and cooking equipment. Sheldon has a limited number of individual items (sleeping bags/rucksacks/waterproofs/fleeces) that students can borrow for the events. Enrolment onto the award does include a discount card for a number of outdoor retailers.

Costs

There are costs to participating in this award, which I have identified below:

DofE registration fee, license fee cost, insurance and training day - £89 (for students who have enrolled already the payment is £51.50)

Practice & Qualifying Expeditions – transport, campsite fees – approx. £250 for both expeditions

I am going to be trying very hard to keep the expedition costs as low as possible and would not envisage the total cost for the award to be more than £350. If you need assistance with any of these costs please get in contact with me.

If your child would like to take on the challenge of the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award please complete the enrolment form, the link is at the bottom of this letter, and make the payment which can be made via parent pay by Friday 17th October. There will be a student and parent information evening for all three levels of the award on Wednesday 8th October. This will take place in the assembly hall at 6pm. Those students who have done bronze or silver awards do not need to attend.

I look forward to guiding them through this award. The Duke of Edinburgh Award website is an excellent resource and has more details on the scheme (<http://www.dofe.org>); please encourage your child to have a look to help them decide whether to undertake this challenge. We are also developing the school DofE website page, which can be found [here](#).

Online forms to complete:

[Parent Information Evening](#)

[Enrolment Form](#)

Yours faithfully

Emma Langdon

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