



February 2017

### Year 12 Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Your son or daughter has expressed an interest in the Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. This highly-regarded Award recognises personal development through regular participation in a programme of activities in five 'sections':

- **Volunteering (Service):** undertaking service to individuals or the community
- **Physical:** improving in an area of sport or fitness activities
- **Skills:** developing practical and social skills and personal interests
- **Expedition:** planning, training for and completion of an adventurous journey
- **Residential:** spending 5 days away, doing something worthwhile with people you don't know

Participants commit an average of an hour per week for each of the Volunteering, Physical and Skills sections, generally for 12 months (or 18 months for one section if a student has not completed an earlier level of Award). They record their progress online through the 'eDofE' system. While participants have until they are 25 to complete their Awards, the aim is obviously to complete this in the summer after A-level exams. Students can count activities they already do, and records can be back-dated a few weeks from the date of registration. Ideas and guidance on these activities – as well as more information about the Award in general can be found at [www.dofe.org](http://www.dofe.org).

The students will be responsible for arranging and recording their activities in the first three sections and finding a Residential to complete, while the Expedition section is organised through school. The Expedition Section is itself made up of three stages, which must be completed in order:

- **Training** – completed during sessions in school and an initial Training trip in July
- **Practice Expedition (beginning of year 13)** – a more-closely supervised rehearsal after the Summer to check they are ready for/make them ready for the...
- **Assessed Expedition (end of year 13 after exams)** – more independent (unaccompanied but still supervised). This involves walking and navigating in a group, camping overnight and carrying all their own equipment – to safely complete a planned journey of about 80km over four days.

The dates for these trips are as follows:

- **Training (Peak District or South Wales):** Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July – Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017
- **Practice Expedition (Wales or Lakes):** 28<sup>th</sup> September – 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017
- **Assessed Expedition (Lakes or Wales):** July 2018 (after A-level exams, dates TBC)

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The school has and maintains a stock of good quality rucksacks, roll mats, tents and approved stoves which we loan to the boys, in order to minimise the cost of participation and ensure the boys are properly equipped. The only specialist kit you might have to provide is sturdy walking boots and waterproofs.

The DofE charge £26 to register a participant on the Bronze Award and make a charge of £8 per student for admin. At this stage we also ask for a £15 contribution toward the costs of administration, replacement of equipment, copying of resources and so on at school, bringing the total initial cost for enrolment to £49. Payment for will be requested shortly before each trip. The costs of the trips have been £44, £70 and £90 respectively for each of the 3 trips recently and are not expected to rise significantly; we try to keep costs down to a minimum, with the bulk of these costs being travel to and from the mountainous locations. Should the cost of enrolment, equipment, or the trips be a barrier to your son's participation, please do get in touch with me to see what can be arranged, as we will discreetly do all we can to ensure this opportunity is available to all.

Before enrolling your son or daughter, please note that while the expedition should be a fantastically enjoyable experience, we take our responsibility for the students' safety incredibly seriously. While every effort is made to control risk on these trips – including training the participants in road safety, first aid, camp craft, and fire safety – outdoor activities do present risks and dangers. As such, the students will be expected to conduct themselves with the utmost respect for the hazards involved, and to follow staff instructions and safety training at all times. Should any student's behaviour fall below the standard expected in a way which presents a danger to themselves or others, they would immediately be withdrawn from that expedition and any future trips, with the expectation that his parents or guardians would arrange their travel home at their expense.

If you would like to enrol your son or daughter on the Gold DofE, please complete the enrolment form online at <http://tinyurl.com/tbshsdofe> ASAP and by Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February at the latest so that I can get the students enrolled. Ideally I would like the payment of the £49 enrolment fee via ParentPay or by cheque handed in to Mrs Kitching in the admin office at the same time, but appreciate next Monday is short notice, so please let me know if you would like to delay payment beyond Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March. [N.B. the form is hosted by Google on an account managed by the school so your data is entirely safe and will only be used for DofE admin purposes.]

Details of the individual trips, along with consent forms, and requests for contact details and any updated medical information will be sent out nearer to each trip. Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me at school via email at [robert.rawlinson@tbshs.org](mailto:robert.rawlinson@tbshs.org).

Yours sincerely,



Bob Rawlinson  
Deputy Head of Sixth Form and DofE Coordinator