



October 2020

## Year 12 Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Your son or daughter has chosen the Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme as their Curriculum Enhancement option. 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). Students have also been made aware of additional guidance in our timetabled lessons, regarding the current restrictions to activities in the light of COVID-19.

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 in-school timetabled sessions will cover training for the Expedition Section, and admin for the Award as a whole, though obviously students will need to commit a great deal more time to completing the Sections, and there will be a financial cost to the programme as a whole, as well as for the Expedition Section and – depending on the activities chosen – the other Sections too.

The Expedition Section is itself made up of three stages, which must be completed in order:

- **Training** – completed during sessions in school and finished before the...
- **Practice Expedition (during year 12, hopefully date TBC)** – a more-closely supervised rehearsal 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 school has and maintains a stock of good quality rucksacks, roll mats, tents and approved stoves which we loan to the participants, in order to minimise the cost of participation and ensure they are properly equipped. The only specialist kit you might have to provide is sturdy walking boots and waterproofs.



In the light of the current COVID-19 crisis, it seems unlikely that we will manage to complete the practice expedition in the summer, although if we are able and the school and Hertfordshire County Council deem it safe then we will aim to do so. We hope for this to happen in May 2021 (date TBC). Otherwise we will complete BOTH the practice and final expeditions in the summer 2022 (after the exams). In the unfortunate event that we are unable to complete ANY expeditions in this time, please be aware your child can complete the expedition with another provider e.g. at university or with an Approved Activity Provider, and they have until the age of 25 to complete the award.

The DofE charge £29 to register a participant on the Gold Award. Payment for trips are usually requested shortly before each trip. The costs of the two trips have been around £110 each in recent years. Students will need to supply their own food to cook on the trips. 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 or daughter'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 their surroundings, those around them, and 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 their parents or guardians would arrange their travel home at their expense.

To complete enrolment, please pay the £29 enrolment fee via ParentPay, and return the completed enrolment form. We are opening registration now as we are only able to back-date registration by about 8 weeks, and I want students to have the longest possible opportunity to complete the Certificate of Achievement for Gold. This is a new formal recognition from the Award, which highlights the achievements the students are able to make while restrictions are on place for COVID-19 and demonstrates that your child has completed the Volunteering, Physical and Skill sections.

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 [dofe@tbshs.org](mailto:dofe@tbshs.org).

Yours sincerely,



Miss Paula Hughes  
DofE Coordinator.