



From: Henry Morgan, Director of the Other Half

8th October 2026

**Parents of Lower Sixth Year Students
Duke of Edinburgh's 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 online 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 some outdoor shops.

Students enrolling on the scheme 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](#). Occasionally students are allocated one of the places only to drop out 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 they 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. In school we offer two types of expedition at Gold level, walking or canoeing. Further details regarding these expeditions are included below. Full details about completing the expeditions by canoe are available in Mr Johnson's letter.

The award's website 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. First preference when signing up will be given to those who have completed Silver. I will also speak to the L6th to explain this in assembly next week.

Costs

Abingdon School, Park Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 1DE

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www.abingdon.org.uk

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 £60.00 This includes initial registration with eDofE (£37.50), a welcome pack, completion certificate, badge (on completion), and a contribution to safety equipment, the DofE centre licence fee, plus expedition equipment maintenance and replacement costs.

Expeditions: Practice expedition £175 approx
Qualifying expedition £225 approx

These costs 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 usually be required to complete an additional training weekend (Saturday 6th March – Sunday 7th March 2027) to gain the skills other students learned at Silver level. It is essential that your child attends all of the 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 are required to plan their expedition routes in readiness for the assessed expedition. Dates for both the training day and planning sessions are below.

Walking Expedition, Training and Planning Dates

Saturday 6th March – Sunday 7th March 2027 – Direct Entry training weekend (where applicable)
Saturday 20th March 2027 - 0900 -1200 - Training and Route Planning
Friday 16th April 2027 – Monday 21st April 2027 - Practice Expedition
Saturday 15th May 2027 - 0900 - 1200 - Review and Route Planning
Sunday 4th July 2027 - Thursday 8th July - Qualifying 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 in full. Please consider if your child will be available for both expeditions and route planning sessions before applying for them to join the award scheme. Training and expedition dates for the canoeing expeditions can be found in Mr Johnson's letter.

Joining the Scheme

Please find a link below to an application form. Please complete this by 1200 on Friday 16th October. Students and parents should please complete the form together. It will only be valid if it comes from a parent's email account.

Application form:

<https://forms.gle/v4rqVz1PGDz9PUAd7>

Once students have been allocated a place they will be notified by email, the start date will be backdated to 1st September so students may start their activities immediately.

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 the specified time, and that this will require a consistent effort and commitment on their part to achieve.

Yours sincerely,

Henry Morgan (on behalf of Will Bower, Head of DofE)
Director of the Other Half
Abingdon School.