



From: Teacher in Charge of DofE Canoeing, Mark Johnson

5 October 2026

Dear Parents of Lower Sixth Students

Duke of Edinburgh's Award Gold Canoeing Expeditions

Introduction to Canoeing Expeditions

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme at Abingdon School allows for expeditions to be completed using an open canoe on a river in addition to the standard walking routes. This unique opportunity allows students to explore some of the inland waterways of the UK and also experience some gentle white water, under close supervision.

Availability of places on Canoeing Expeditions

Places on canoeing expeditions are very limited and are highly sought after, therefore students must be willing to show commitment at an early stage.

At Gold Award level there are only 8 places available and priority will be given to those students who have previous canoeing experience, although no experience is not necessarily a barrier to entry. Should students be unsuccessful in applying for the canoeing expeditions they will still have the opportunity to join the walking groups, if they so wish.

Dates

At Gold Award level there are two compulsory expeditions:

Gold Practice Expedition

Kennet & Avon and Oxford Canals (possibility this may move to Brecon & Monmouthshire Canal)

Monday 22 March to Thursday 25 March 2027

Gold Assessment Expedition

River Wye, Herefordshire

Sunday 4 to Wednesday 7 July 2027

By signing up to the Gold Award, students **must** take part in and complete both expedition weekends. Failure to do so will result in them not completing the expedition section and therefore not obtaining the award at this level, unless they can find an external open award expedition to complete. It may also put the expedition numbers at risk for the remaining students. Therefore, please consider if your child will be available for all dates before applying for them to join the award.

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Costs

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.

Enrolment fee	£60.00
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This includes initial registration with eDofE (£37.50), a welcome pack, certificate and badge (on completion), a contribution to licensing cost, a contribution to safety and expedition equipment maintenance and replacement.

Practice expedition	£140.00 (approx.)
Assessment expedition	£235.00 (approx.)

The joining fee is payable on application and both expedition fees will be charged to the school bill at the end of the Michaelmas term.

These costs are per student and cover items such as travel, campsite fees, river licences, maps, safety equipment and expedition food. All paddling equipment will be provided by the School Canoe Club and will include; open canoe, paddle, waterproof kit barrel, buoyancy aid, helmet, cagoule and all other associated safety equipment. The school will also provide a tent and cooking apparatus for each expedition.

students are expected to provide all other camping equipment and personal canoeing equipment, and guidance can be sought from school staff if needed.

Equipment

A guide to equipment and cooking for DofE Canoeing will be provided to all students accepted on the Canoeing expeditions. This will be discussed further during an on-school planning session; however please contact me if you require any advice on purchasing any specialist equipment.

Joining the Scheme

To join the scheme students and parents should complete the google form link below together. It will only be accepted if it comes from a parent's email account. The form should be completed by midday on Friday 16 October 2026. Please note that this is the same form sent by Mr Morgan and need only be completed once.

<https://forms.gle/RrfHRAAtSpk9pmnyt6>

In addition to this Google form a short supporting letter explaining previous canoeing experience and any relevant qualifications should be emailed to Mr Johnson by Friday 16 October 2026.

Please also indicate if your child would like to undertake the expedition by foot should their application be unsuccessful.

Yours sincerely

Mark Johnson
Teacher in Charge - DofE Canoeing