DofE Information Booklet

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About the Award

Award Sections

There are four main sections of a DofE programme; Volunteering, Physical, Skills, and Expedition.
At Gold level the participants will also complete a Residential section.

Bronze (14+) Those who aren't 14 yet but are in the school year in which their peer group turn 14 may be able to start a Bronze DofE programme.

Volunteering	Physical	Skills	Expedition
3 months	3 months	3 months	Plan, train for and complete a 2 day, 1 night expedition
Participants must also undertake a further three months in the Volunteering, Physical or Skills section.			

Silver (15+) Those who aren't 15 yet, but are in the school year in which their peer group turn 15 may be able to start a Silver DofE programme.

Volunteering	Physical	Skills	Expedition
6 months	One for 6 months / one for 3 months		Plan, train for and complete a 3 day, 2 night expedition
If participants haven't achieved their Bronze Award they must undertake a further 6 months in Volunteering or the longer of their Physical or Skills section.			

Gold (16+)

Volunteering	Physical	Skills	Expedition	Residential
12 months	One for 12 months / one for 6 months		Plan, train for and complete a 4 day, 3 night expedition	Undertake a shared activity in a residential setting away from home for 5 days and 4 nights
If participants have not achieved their Silver Award they must undertake a further 6 months in Volunteering or the longer of their Physical or Skills section.				

Not sure what to do for your sections, have a look at the long list of ideas:
https://www.dofe.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/programme_ideas_-_COMPLETE_brief.pdf

To achieve an Award young people must show persistence, commitment and personal development. This is why it is expected that students complete at least 1 hour a week of each activity for the duration indicated for each level. This duration cannot be reduced due to frequency of activity eg: you cannot reduce a 6 month section into 3 months even though you might be doing it for 2 hours a week rather than 1 hour. This is done so that participants are able to demonstrate commitment to the activity/ section.

At SHFGS the expectation is that Bronze Award is completed in one year, Silver Award in just over a year and Gold within two years, however, students have until their 24th birthday if they haven't managed to get it fully submitted.

Volunteering

(please note that we have not performed safeguarding checkers on any of the volunteering opportunities shared below)

- Leighton Linslade Helpers (charity providing food bank, community fridge, social supermarket as well as other community services) *Please note that children under 16 will need to be accompanied by a parent or guardian when attending the meeting as well as when undertaking activities.* help@leightonlinsladehelpers.org.uk
- Thames valley community officer help (A community centre in Aylesbury is looking for a freshen up, which would include some painting of walls) janine.daniel@thamesvalley.police.uk

- volunteering opportunities map created for you by the DofE team: https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1SElhUjKXRJS1e_xz_Pgr2mDwqbBvB9I&ll=51.657863785535625%2C-1.0606641499999858&z=8
-

Residential (Gold only)
This is a section that is only applicable for Gold participants which involves you having a shared activity or specific course with people you don't know, in a residential setting away from home and in an unfamiliar environment for 5 days and 4 nights. Students are to organise this on their own. For more information about the Residential section, please visit: https://www.dofe.org/run/running-residentials?dm_t=0,0,0,0,0

Find residential opportunities:
- https://www.dofe.org/opportunity-finder/opportunity-for-dofe-participant/?paged=1
- list of low-cost (under £300) or free residentials.

Occasionally our school gets advertisements about residential opportunities that will be shared below. Note that it is the responsibility of parents/carers/guardians to check that any activity their child/ward undertakes for their DofE programme is appropriately managed and insured.
- http://www.high-safari.co.uk/index.html

For more information about the section (including residential) please see: https://www.dofe.org/do/sections/ and https://www.dofe.org/do/ideas/
Check what kind of activities you can do for each of your sections: https://www.dofe.org/do/ideas/

Assessor Report

Physical, Skills, Volunteering and Residential (if applicable) are organised and completed by the student. Students are to have an assessor report for each at the end of the section duration. For more information about assessor reports, see: https://www.dofe.org/assessor/
You can send the following video to your assessor about the reports: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RX0lrfI3Uc8&t=3s

Expedition is organised by an external company called The School of Outdoors.

Signing up for DofE

The Launch and enrolment onto the DofE program at SHFGS takes place at the beginning of the year with the deadline in October.
If you wish to enrol your child to the program outside of the September-October period, please wait for the next academic year.

After the sign up

After the sign up and payment deadline has passed, the DofE manager at the school will register the students with eDofE which then sends log in information to the student. After they log in to eDofE and add their address, the welcome pack will be sent to that address.

The expedition provider will be contacting parents and students using the information you provide on the sign up google form.
Any questions about the expedition should be sent directly to Info@schoolofoutdoors.uk

Cost

The full cost of the award is

2023-2024	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Total cost	£252	£411	£602

The cost includes the DofE sign up fee, expedition fee, parent mail fee and transportation organised for some expeditions.

What is included in the cost:

- DofE enrolment place, Welcome Pack that contains a DofE participant discount card
- Three events running by the School of Outdoors (our expedition company): training day and two overnight expeditions
- The following expedition equipment:
  • Tents (Three Person)
  • Cooking Stoves
  • Gas for the cooking stove
  • Maps & Map Case
  • Compasses
  • Group First Aid Kits
  • Group Shelter
  • Water Filters (Gold Only)
  • Trowels (Gold Only)
  • Trackers
  • Rucksacks (Additional cost)
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What is not included in the cost:

- personal items such as walking boots, socks, waterproof (DofE have the following kit list but your child doesn't need to have every single item on this list)
- food for the expedition

Pupil Premium finance:

In 2026 the school has agreed to use Pupil Premium funding to cover 50% of the cost of the Duke of Edinburgh award. This means that instead of costing £301 it will cost £150 which is spread over 5 monthly installments of £30 (not including December).

Since then I've been able to secure additional funding with the Duke of Edinburgh itself that amounts to about 20% of the cost. Once the total student numbers been confirmed, I will contact you on how much the cost went down by

There are additional financial support that the school and expedition company can offer:

- Increasing the number of instalments so that monthly payments is smaller but over a longer period of time
- Welfare fund. See more info on https://www.sirhenryfloyd.co.uk/Parents/Welfare-Fund/
- With a separate request to gtalipova@shfgs.co.uk we could lend a sleeping bag and a sleeping mat.

The Expedition

Dates

All expedition dates are compulsory. More information will be available through the School of Outdoors portal after signing up.

	dates/times	**student drop off time and location**	**student pick up time and location**	**transport**
Bronze training	Sun 7th of March 09:00-16:00	09:00 SHFGS	16:00 SHFGS	parent/ guardian's responsibility
Bronze practical training	18:00 Fri 7th of May - 16:00 Sat 8th of May	18:00 Phasels Wood Scout Camp & Activity Centre, Kings Langley WD4 9NA, UK	16:00 Phasels Wood Scout Camp & Activity Centre, Kings Langley WD4 9NA, UK	parent/ guardian's responsibility
Bronze qualifying	09:00 Thu 15th of July -16:00 Fri 16th of July	09:00 Link Road Car Park, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire - HP16 9AE, UK	16:00 Link Road Car Park, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire - HP16 9AE, UK	parent/ guardian's responsibility
Silver training	Sat 6th of March 09:00 - 16:00	09:00 SHFGS	16:00 SHFGS	parent/ guardian's responsibility
Silver practice	18:00 Mon 17th of May - 16:00 Wed 19th of May	09:00 Parmoor Park Field, Parmoor Lane, Frieth, Henley-on-Thames RG9 6NN, UK	16:00 Lane End Car Park Handleton Common, Finings Rd, High Wycombe HP14, UK	parent/ guardian's responsibility
Silver Qualifying	Wed 16th of June - Fri 18th of June	09:00 Cowleaze Wood Car Park, Cowleaze Woods, Watlington OX49 5HX, UK	16:00 Cowleaze Wood Car Park, Cowleaze Woods, Watlington OX49 5HX, UK	parent/ guardian's responsibility
Gold training	Sat 6th of March 09:00 - 16:00	09:00 SHFGS	16:00 SHFGS	parent/ guardian's responsibility

Gold practical training	Thu 25th March 09:00-16:00	09:00 Cowleaze Wood Car Park, Cowleaze Woods, Watlington OX49 5HX, UK	16:00 Cowleaze Wood Car Park, Cowleaze Woods, Watlington OX49 5HX, UK	parent/ guardian's responsibility
Gold practice	Tue 11th of May -Thu 13th of May	06:00 SHFGS	20:00 SHFGS	coach or school minibus
Gold qualifying	Mon 12th of July - Fri 16th of July	08:30 SHFGS	20:00 SHFGS	coach or school minibus

Behaviour

We expect exemplary behaviour from our students outside of school. Behaviour will be monitored and any poor behaviour will be sanctioned either during the expedition or/and upon return to school following SHFGS Behaviour Policy.

Phones

We would like to encourage everyone to leave their phones at home. For safety the walking group will be carrying GPS tracker that has an emergency button that will notify the expedition leaders of the emergency and their precise location.

If phones are used while on the expedition for any use (apart from emergencies), the student and their team are at a risk of failing their expedition section and will need to arrange another expedition at an additional cost to parents/guardians.

Your walking team

Expedition group must be made up of 7 people. This is normally split between 2/3 tent groups. Students are not allowed to stay in the tents on their own. Only those of the same biological sex are allowed to stay in the same tent.
Walking team allocation will be done by the School of Outdoors during training.

It may be necessary to rearrange the teams at the last minute due to absences/ illnesses.

Equipment

The expeditions all involve carrying full expedition equipment and camping overnight. Where possible, we recommend borrowing or purchasing equipment second-hand.

Our expedition provider supplies each walking team with: tent, cooking stove and gas, maps, compasses, general first aid kit and trackers.

Equipment list from the DofE: https://www.dofe.org/shopping/dofe-expedition-kit-list/
Equipment summary and tips from our Gold DofE students:
Expedition Equipment Talk Summary

ensure the participant has all their personal medication eg epipens, hayfever tablets etc

nuts are strictly prohibited on all expeditions and we follow no-nut policy on trips just like in school

Any questions about the expedition should be sent directly to Info@schoolofoutdoors.uk

Support

Support from parents/guardians

Your support and encouragement is very valuable and helps students see the value in what they signed up for. You can about their DofE sections - what are they doing for each section; how long have they got left to complete; have they asked and chased their assessors for their assessor report at the end of the allocated time

Support from DofE - useful links

DofE Youtube channel: https://www.youtube.com/c/theDofEUK
Assessor reports: https://www.dofe.org/assessor/
Award Sections: https://www.dofe.org/do/sections/
Activities for each Sections: https://www.dofe.org/do/ideas/
Volunteering opportunities map: https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1SElhUjKXRJS1e_xz_Pgr2mDwqbBvB9I&ll=51.6578637855356%2C-1.0606641499999858&z=9
Volunteering opportunities in school: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1FOgA4R88J3qHOUz3ftxABwCygB5eOudHKtmP8pQh4sY/edit?usp=sharing
Equipment list: https://www.dofe.org/shopping/dofe-expedition-kit-list/
Digital “Welcome Pack”: https://www.dofe.org/welcome-packs-dth/
Find residential opportunities: https://www.dofe.org/opportunity-finder/opportunity-for-dofe-participant/?paged=1
Residential (Gold) checklist: https://www.dofe.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Residential_Checklist.pdf

School support
The school runs a DofE drop-in session on Fridays at lunchtime in P15 or the Science Office where most enquiries are addressed.

Common questions and answers:

My child has not received their certificate

There are a number of reasons why your child has not received their certificate yet. Please advise your child to come and see Ms Talipova during one of the DofE drop-ins (every Friday at lunch in the science office or P15) so we can assist them.

*Welcome pack and **initial eDofE logins***

The participants will be registered on eDofE before the winter holidays. This doesn’t mean that they cannot start completing their sections.
Once received, the participants will need to follow the link in their school emails, the participant will be registered for the Duke of Edinburgh. DofE then will send an automw the link on the

email, add required details such as home address etc to which they would like to receive the “Welcome Pack”
If you lost your “Welcome Pack” you can print one from here:
https://www.dofe.org/welcome-packs-dth/

eDofE - forgot password

Please advise your child to come and see Ms Talipova during one of the DofE drop-ins (every Friday at lunch in the science office or P15) so we can assist them.