Aylesbury Grammar School
The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award
Scheme Information: 2015-2016

About The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award

Since it began in 1956, The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award (DofE) has been dedicated to the personal development of young people from all backgrounds.

With the widest reach of any UK youth charity, 280,000 young people (30,000 are from disadvantaged backgrounds) undertake inspiring DofE programmes to achieve Bronze, Silver or Gold Duke of Edinburgh’s Awards every year.

To date, the award has helped 4 million people in the UK and, thanks to over 120 sister organisations, 2 million internationally. Its commitment, efforts and results were recognised in 2006, during its 50th Anniversary, when her Majesty the Queen granted it Royal Charter status.

A DofE programme is a real adventure from beginning to end. It doesn’t matter who they are or where they are from, participants just need to be aged between 14 and 24 and to realise that there’s more to life than sitting on a sofa watching life pass them by.

Participants can do programmes at three levels, Bronze, Silver or Gold, which lead to a Duke of Edinburgh’s Award. They achieve an award by completing a personal programme of activities in four sections: Volunteering, Physical, Skills and Expedition (plus Residential if they are going for Gold).

They will find themselves helping people or the community, getting fitter, developing skills, going on an expedition and taking part in a residential activity (Gold only). But the best bit is that they get to choose what they do.

Their programme can be full of activities and projects that get them buzzing. And along the way they will pick up experiences, friends and talents that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. Further information about the award can be found at: www.dofe.org.

The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award at Aylesbury Grammar School

The school has been offering the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award scheme since 2011. The scheme is being co-ordinated by Alison Richards with the expedition programme being managed by David Goss, from Zest for Adventure, a locally-based DofE Approved Activity Provider. For the academic year 2015-2016 we will be offering DofE at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels.

At each level of the award, the programme will start in September 2015, and the programme throughout the year will be as follows:

**Information Meeting**
**Purpose:** explaining to students and parents what is involved; explaining timetable and costs; discussing the expeditions; taking contact details of interested students
**Timing:** first half of autumn term.

**Focus Meetings (x 6)**
**Purpose:** each meeting concentrating on a different aspect of the award: Volunteering, Physical and Skills Sections; eDofE website etc. Time allowed in each meeting to discuss individual questions on anything to do with the award.
**Timing:** held predominantly in the autumn term.

**Expedition Programme Preparation Session**
**Purpose:** explaining how the expedition programme works and the application process.
**Timing:** end of autumn term.
**Expedition Programme Planning Session**  
**Purpose:** demonstrating equipment required and advising on options for buying or hiring it; organising participants into expedition teams.  
**Timing:** start of spring term.

**Expedition Briefing Sessions (x 3)**  
**Purpose:** finalising arrangements for the expedition.  
**Timing:** the week before each expedition.

**Training Expedition**  
**Format:** skills training with an overnight camp and then an accompanied day walk.  
**Duration:** 2 days (Bronze and Silver).  
**Timing:** second half of spring term.  
**Location:** the Chiltern Hills (Bronze and Silver).

**Practice Expedition**  
**Format:** shadowed expedition with an overnight camp.  
**Duration:** 2 days (Bronze); 3 days (Silver).  
**Timing:** first half of summer term.  
**Location:** the Chiltern Hills (Bronze); the Cotswold Hills (Silver).

**Qualifying Expedition**  
**Format:** remotely supervised and independently assessed expedition with an overnight camp.  
**Duration:** 2 days (Bronze); 3 days (Silver).  
**Timing:** second half of summer term.  
**Location:** the Chiltern Hills (Bronze); the White Peak District (Silver).

**Expedition Presentation Session**  
**Purpose:** for participants to deliver their presentations.  
**Timing:** 2 weeks after the qualifying expedition.

The school won’t be running a Silver Expedition Programme in 2016 but, instead, participants will be able to enrol on the Open Silver Expedition Programme being run by Zest for Adventure. This will be open to DoFE participants from any DoFE Centre – not just Aylesbury Grammar School. Alternatively, participants can enrol on any DoFE Approved Expedition Programme (these are advertised on the DoFE website).

The school won’t be offering a Gold Expedition Programme in 2016 but, instead, will help participants to find a suitable DoFE Approved Expedition Programme to meet their own aspirations (these are advertised on the DoFE website).

If they really commit to completing the award, participants should be able to complete their Bronze Award within a year and, if they have completed the previous level first, they should be able to complete their Silver Award in a year also and the Gold Award within 18 months. However, this is not guaranteed – it depends entirely on the amount of time they commit to DoFE.

The number of expeditions scheduled is the minimum requirement – if participants do not meet the required standards, then they will be required to undertake additional expeditions in order to successfully complete their Expedition Section.

**Levels of the Award**

Participants need to be at least 14 years old to enrol on the Bronze Award, at least 15 years old to enrol on the Silver Award and at least 16 years old to enrol on the Gold Award. They all have until their 25th birthday to complete the award. At Aylesbury Grammar School we will be offering the Bronze Award to students in Year 10, the Silver Award to those in Years 11 and 12 and the Gold Award to those in Years 12 and 13.

It is not essential for Silver and Gold Award participants to have completed the previous level first. However, they generally find the Silver and Gold Awards easier, and are more likely to complete them successfully, if they have completed the previous level beforehand.

The minimum timescale to complete the Bronze Award is 6 months. The minimum timescale to complete the Silver Award is 6 months if they have first completed Bronze, and 12 months if they have not (“direct entrants”). The minimum timescale to complete the Gold Award is 12 months if they have first completed Silver, and 18 months if they have not (“direct entrants”).
Attendance

Please note that The Duke of Edinburgh's Award runs according to a nationally-determined syllabus which must be followed exactly in order for participants to be approved as having successfully completed the award. In particular, the Expedition Section has very specific requirements: it is compulsory for all participants to complete all the above stages. If, for any reason, participants are unable to attend any of the above expedition events, they will need to arrange to complete that event before being allowed to continue with their expedition programme – this may mean waiting until the next year before being able to continue with their expedition programme or arranging to complete that event with another approved expedition provider. This is primarily because participants are given progressively more independence as the expedition programme develops and, for health and safety reasons, it is vital that the school and the local authority has ensured that all participants are appropriately trained and experienced. Re-arranging an expedition is liable to incur significant extra cost.

The dates of the meetings and expeditions for this academic year have all been carefully chosen so that they fit in with the school calendar, as well as the requirements of the DoE, as well as possible – we are not able to change any of them. Please look at the Calendar carefully before enrolling to make sure that you are able to attend all the events.

Costs

Participants undertaking DofE at the school will incur the following costs:

**Award Scheme Fee**

**Bronze:** £90.00.
**Silver:** £120.00.
**Gold:** £150.00.

This is a one-off fee for each level of the award (regardless of how long participants take to complete that award) and covers enrolment with the DoE plus management and support throughout the programme. **It must be paid in full prior to the autumn half-term holiday. This fee is non-refundable after this date.** Payment for this should be made to the school by ParentPay.

**Expedition Programme Fee**

**Bronze:** £200.00 in total.
**Silver:** £300.00 in total (Zest for Adventure Open Expedition).

This fee covers all expedition training, supervision and assessment costs, as well as campsite fees. **It must be paid in full by the end of the first week of the spring term (Bronze)/the end of the second week of the spring term (Silver). This fee is non-refundable after this date.** Payment for this should be made to the school by ParentPay (Bronze)/directly to Zest for Adventure (Silver).

**Travel**

Participants are responsible for arranging their own travel to and from all expedition locations.

**Equipment Hire**

Equipment may be hired from: The Top Car Park, Green Park Centre, Stablebridge Road, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire, HP22 5NE. The equipment store is open on Wednesday evenings only. Equipment must be booked at least one week in advance. Further details about this can be found at: [www.dofebucks.org](http://www.dofebucks.org).

Equipment available for hire is: boots, waterproof jacket and trousers, rucksack, tent, sleeping bag and liner, camping mat, stove and fuel bottle, compass, map case, survival bag.

All this equipment is required for each expedition. If all this equipment was hired, the cost at current prices would be no more than **£23.50** per person per expedition. There is a total deposit of **£100.00** per hire for general equipment plus a deposit of **£150.00** per tent. Cheques for this should be made payable to: Buckinghamshire County Council.

**Expedition Food and Fuel**

Participants are responsible for providing all their own expedition food and fuel.

**Other Activities**

Participants are required to undertake a variety of activities of their choice to complete the Volunteering, Physical and Skills and, if appropriate, Residential Sections of the award. Depending on their choice of activities, there may well be other costs associated with these activities.

**Participation in the Expedition Programme**
The Expedition Section of the DofE requires a great deal of support from teachers at the school who freely give up their time to help participants on their expeditions. Experience has shown that participants who delay starting the various sections of their DofE tend to be the ones who never fully complete it. In order that volunteer staff are able to concentrate their efforts on the most committed participants, we operate a system where only participants who have made a good start on the Volunteering, Physical and Skills Sections of their award can take part in the expedition programme in the first academic year. When they enrol on the award, participants are given a realistic target of progress to achieve by the start of the spring term if they wish to take part in that year’s expedition programme. Participants who do not manage to meet this target by the deadline are given the opportunity to take part in the following year’s expedition programme.

Communication

The main means of communicating with participants will be at team meetings. It is very important that all participants attend all the meetings. In addition, information is sent by email and posted on the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award section of the school website. In general, information is sent to participants only – this is because a key principle of the award is to encourage self-reliance. However, important information, particularly regarding expedition arrangements, will also be copied in to parents. For this reason, it is necessary that we are provided with email addresses for both participants and parents. It is also important that these email accounts are checked regularly.

Participants in the DofE are now all registered on the award’s website: eDofE. Participants need to complete their objectives and action plans for each of the different sections of the award on this website, and have these approved, before starting work on that section. They also need to ensure that all the evidence showing that they have completed each section of the award is uploaded onto this website. Only information recorded on eDofE can be used in determining whether a participant has successfully completed the award.

Contact

For general information about The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, please visit their website: [www.dofe.org](http://www.dofe.org).

For information about the Aylesbury Grammar School DofE Award Scheme, please contact the school’s DofE Co-ordinator:

Alison Richards  
2 Meadow Way, Wing, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, LU7 0TG  
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Mobile: 07751 594963  
Email: alisonrichards07@gmail.com

For information about the Aylesbury Grammar School DofE Expedition Programme, please contact the school’s DofE Expedition Provider:

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15 Firs Path, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, LU7 3JG  
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Mobile: 07900 410327  
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