



April 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Practice Weekend: 22/23 May 2021

We are looking forward to the forthcoming DofE Bronze Practice weekend. We will meet with the students in advance of the weekend, on **Tuesday 11 May, 3.30 - 4.30pm**. In this meeting we will discuss the schedule for the weekend, start to organise expedition teams and give advice on how assessors can complete their assessor reports for the three other sections.

Saturday 22 May 2021 – School-based training day

This day will take place at Ashlyns School from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Students will complete a carousel of activities including cooking, tents, route planning, navigation and first aid. They will need to cook a boil in the bag meal on a Trangia for lunch, demonstrate they can put up a tent and have a kit check.

Students will need to come in sensible and comfortable clothes, and wear shoes they do not mind getting muddy if the field is wet.

Students need to bring a boil in the bag meal (available from most outdoor shops), snacks and drinks for the day and their kit, which will be checked (please see further information below).

Sunday 23 May 2021 – Practice Walk

There will be a staggered start between 8.00am and 10.00am from Ivinghoe Beacon National Trust car park. Once teams have been decided, students will be told what time they need to be dropped off in the morning.

Students will walk from Ivinghoe Beacon to Ashlyns School on a pre-planned route. For the first half of the walk, students will be accompanied by a member of Ashlyns Staff or a volunteer. For the second half, they will either be remotely supervised or continue to be closely supervised, based on their confidence with navigating. The focus for this walk will be navigating and following a route, not returning to school first. Students need to be out for a minimum of 6 hours for the Bronze award, and therefore students will arrive back at Ashlyns School between approximately 2.00pm and 4.30pm. When students arrive back at school they will be debriefed, return school group kit and will contact their parent/carer to advise when they need to be collected. Please do not come to school until you have been contacted, as different groups will return at different times.

Students will need to bring normal expedition kit (see below), lunch and snacks for the day, and a minimum of 2 litres of water.

Mobile phones

Students are not permitted to use phones during expeditions, unless it is an emergency. Students will need to decide who will be bringing the emergency phone for their group. This should remain switched off for the whole trip, wrapped in a plastic waterproof bag in their rucksack (unless there is an emergency). This phone will be brought at the students' own risk, so we recommend bringing an old phone if possible. We do not expect to see mobile phones unless contacting parents at the end of the walk, and only when instructed to by a member of staff. This is a back-to-basics expedition and failure to comply with expectations may result in your child not completing the Award.

Medical Considerations

If your child will require special medical considerations for the weekend, please contact me before Tuesday 4 May. Special considerations, such as having an adapted route or lighter bag, require medical evidence to be submitted to Herts County Council.

Expedition Groups

Students will be asked who they would like to walk with and I will try to group students with at least one friend, if this is possible. DofE is about working with new people, so students should not expect a group entirely of their friends.

Contact numbers

The contact number for the minibus driver, who will be able to drive and pass on a message in case of emergency, is 07376426330.

Please do not try and contact your child over the weekend; if students do contact you please inform us straight away as their first point of contact should be their supervisor, not family/home.

Expectations

We have high expectations of behaviour throughout the weekend and individuals who fail to meet these expectations may be removed from the award, however we do not anticipate having to do this. Spray-can deodorants are not allowed on this trip as they are highly flammable. Litter must be put in bins or kept in bags until students reach a bin and basic respect of the countryside is expected at all times.

Food

Students will receive further guidance about food but they will need to bring the following:

Saturday: boil in the bag meal for lunch, snacks and drinks

Sunday: lunch, snacks and a minimum of 2L of water

Please avoid any nuts in your planning due to allergies.

eDofE

Students need to ensure they are completing all the sections for their Bronze Award on eDofE. We held after school sessions last term to teach students how to use eDofE. We will discuss how assessors can submit their reports when we meet with students on Tuesday 11 May. Please can you check with your son/daughter when they are due to finish each section so that you can support them in asking their assessor to complete the report.

Kit

Please check through the kit list attached.

It is essential that your child has suitable walking boots with ankle support. Please contact me if you are having issues obtaining walking boots. On the morning of departure a full kit check will take place in the dining hall to help students pack their rucksacks and ensure they are prepared to undertake the expedition.

Please ensure all kit is properly waterproofed; rain covers are not sufficient. Fashion leggings and jeans are not effective when wet and should not be worn. DofE advice is that bags should not weigh more than 25% of the participant's body weight (including group kit).

It is each team's responsibility to decide who will bring each item of the shared group kit, eg washing up liquid, tea towel etc.

Maps, tents, compasses and Trangias will be issued on Saturday to groups and they will need to return them on Sunday. School kit issued to each group is the responsibility of the group to return in the condition it was issued. Kit which is lost or damaged due to negligence will need to be paid for by the group.

Students are not camping, although we will try to give them as close experience as possible. Sleeping bags and roll mats remain on the kit list. If students plan to complete the Silver or Gold award, it would be sensible to invest in these items now. If they plan to complete just the Bronze award they should use any sleeping bag or roll mat they already own (condition or warmth is not an issue), otherwise please borrow from friends, family etc. If you absolutely can not find anyone to borrow from anyone, please contact me.

If your son/daughter has any questions about the weekend they should raise these at the meeting on Tuesday 11 May as other students may also have the same question.

Dates for the Calendar

For the assessed expedition, students will need to plan their own routes; there will be after school sessions for this. This is a compulsory element of the DofE expedition section which students must attend.

Tuesday 11 May 2021, 3.30 – 4.30pm – DofE Meeting about practice weekend and assessor reports

Saturday 22/Sunday 23 May 2021 – Practice weekend

Wednesday 26 May, 3.30 - 5.00pm – Route planning

Monday 21 June, 3.30 - 5.00pm – Route planning

Wednesday 23 June, 3.30 - 5.00pm – Route planning

Wednesday 30 June, 3.30 – 4.00pm - Pre expedition meeting

Saturday 3/Sunday 4 July – Qualifying expedition

Monday 5 July, 3.30pm – 4.30pm – eDofE session on filling in the expedition section

If you have any questions then please contact me: dofe@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk

Yours sincerely



Miss C Tubbritt
DofE School contact